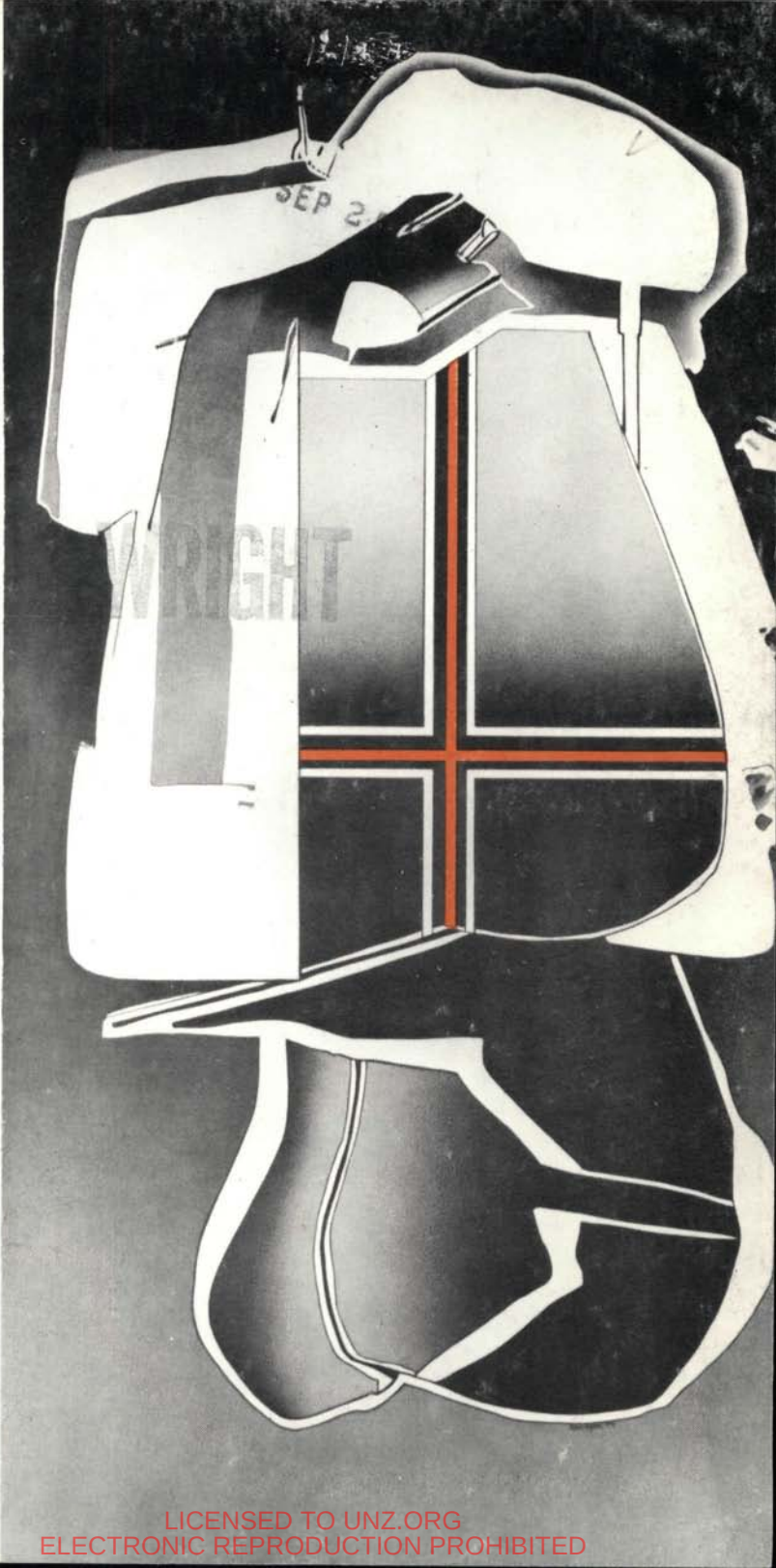
The Paris Review

58

MacLeish
Interview

Prose
Poetry
Art

$1.95
12p 8F



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dear Reader:

For almost a year, I have been helping the Waldenbooks Company in its efforts to get Americans to buy and read more books. One of the sad statistics of our society is that only 3% of the American public buys hard cover books. This points out that the home library, which was once such a staple for informed people, has lost much of its importance.

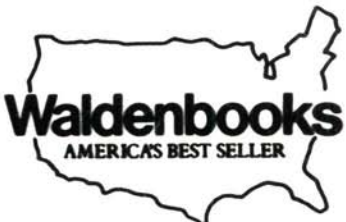
Jonathan Swift spoke of books as being "children of the brain," but the American home has become a nursery without children. Waldenbooks, the nation's largest bookstore chain with over 340 stores across the nation, would like to rekindle an interest in books and make a visit to a bookstore or library a regular condition of one's week, something to look forward to.

It is a privilege to be included in the Waldenbooks campaign.

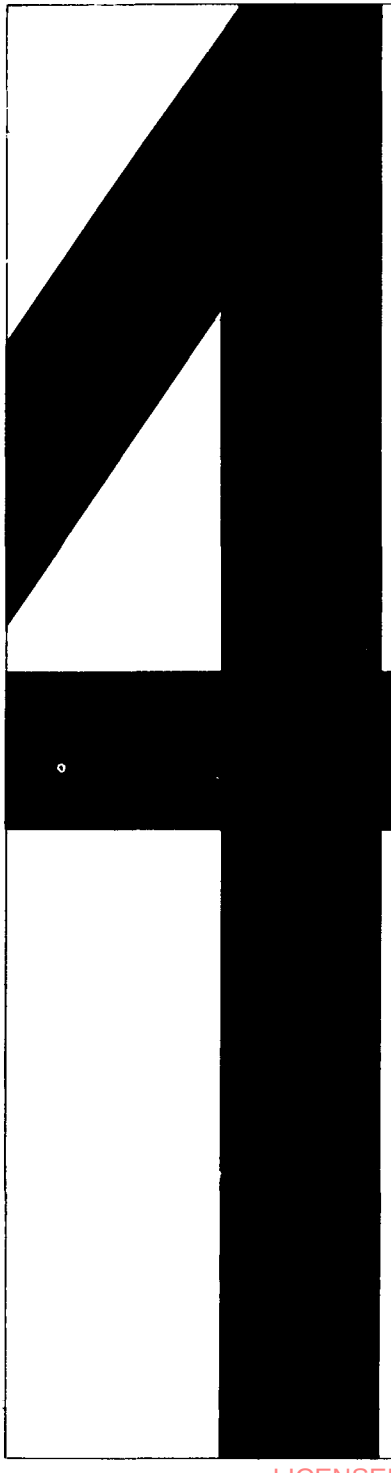
Best Regards,

George Plimpton

George Plimpton



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



A new collection of poems by the winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award—one of the rare, distinguished, unmistakable voices in American poetry.

Poems 4 Alan Dugan

Stanley Kunitz says:
"Alan Dugan's poetry, from the beginning, has had bite and style. The bittersweet quality of his work deepens with the years. His new poems are spare, quirky, fierce, unconcessive, grudging, loving, and terribly real."

Richard Howard says:
"He writes to save himself, and he is too honest and desperate in his solitude for the consolation of some visionary transcendence of language."

$6.50 at all bookstores.
Also available in paperback at $2.95.

ATLANTIC-LITTLE, BROWN

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Three New Novels

WALTER ABISH

ALPHABETICAL AFRICA. "An exciting continent of words" --Irving Malin.

Cloth,$7.95;Paper,$3.75

COLEMAN DOWELL

MRS. OCTOBER WAS HERE."A marvelous story by a very gifted writer" --William Targ.

Cloth,$9.25;Paper,$3.75

JOHN HAWKES

DEATH, SLEEP & THE TRAVELER. "Exquisite and strange and rich" --William Goyen.

Cloth,$6.95

New Directions

The Fifth Annual
Squaw Valley Community Of Writers
August 17 - 24, 1974

Workshops in fiction, non-fiction, poetry, filmwriting and playwrighting. Dramatic readings of participants' plays by a professional company. The staff will include Oakley Hall, Jeremy Larner, Galway Kinnell, Max Steele, Lorenzo Semple jr., David Perlman, and others. Some scholarships available for Californians.

For details, write:
Squaw Valley Community Of Writers
Olympic Valley, California 95730

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE VILLAGE VOICE IS A WRITER'S NEWSPAPER

Jack Newfield, would like to reform the prisons by sticking a few corrupt judges in them.
Mary Perot Nichols, whose search for scandals frequently causes a few.
Joe Flaherty, the last remaining civilized reactionary.
Nat Hentoff, digging up amazing stories about the press and the FBI, who probably dig up amazing stories about Hentoff.
Frederic Morton, hard at work on a socio-cultural-political-ontological-anthropological (and very funny) festschrift celebrating genus man 1974 A.D.
Clark Whelton, sticking pins in liberal voodoo dolls.
Paul Cowan, brings new depth to investigative reporting, finding the feelings as well as the facts behind a story.
Ron Rosenbaum, writes about such strange affairs as Leo Shull's "Whore War," Troy Donahue's "comeback," and George McGovern's "campaign."
Lucian K. Truscott IV, who learned to write at the West Point School of Journalism, and has been unlearning everything ever since.
Phil Tracy, discovers the worms under the Rock in Albany.
Alexander Cockburn, providing an unorthodox view of the orthodox press.
Jill Johnston, writing on herselves.
Andrew Sarris on films: don't miss, don't avoid, don't bother.
Jules Feiffer, who knows you better than your analyst.
Plus dozens of other writers every issue who cover politics, movies, theatre, music, dance, sex, books, and almost everything else writers are interested in.

THAT'S WHY THE VILLAGE VOICE IS A READER'S NEWSPAPER

the village VOICE

☐ 1 Year/$8.50 ☐ 2 Years/$14.00 ☐ 3 Years/$18.00 ☐ 1 Year Foreign/$10.00

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Send this form with your payment to:
Dept. S, The Village Voice, 80 University Place, New York, N.Y. 10003

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ELAINE

LOVES

THE PARIS REVIEW

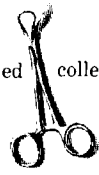
ELAINE'S

1703 SECOND AVE
NEW YORK CITY

reservations: TE1-9558

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

From **Harper's Magazine Press**, a distinguished collection of short stories...



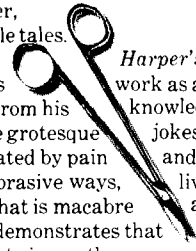
Rituals of Surgery by Richard Selzer

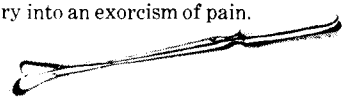
A surgeon and a call girl spend a night together, collide, and separate. A nose transplant in 15th Century Florence fails . . . or does it? A

farmer loses his life in pursuit of a strange lust. A physician finds that he cannot heal, that his skills evade him, in a blighted and war-torn landscape.

These are the lattices on which Richard Selzer, a New Haven surgeon, strings his remarkable tales.

Published previously in *Antaeus*, *Playgirl*, and *American Review*, his work as a writer derives from his knowledge of anatomy, physiology, pathology, death, all the grotesque jokes that creation offers. He writes of people isolated by pain and exposure. They encounter others in accidental and abrasive ways, live nightmares instead of lives, are distorted by all that is macabre and disorderly. In this, his first collection, Selzer demonstrates that pain can be transmuted into plot, isolation into irony, the rituals of surgery into an exorcism of pain.





"...Nabokovian...Selzer's characteristic polish...is like the glint of little instruments."

At your bookseller's or from **Harper's Magazine Press**
2 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016

. . . . . .

Please send me_____ copies of *Rituals of Surgery* at $6.95 each. (New York residents add appropriate sales tax).

Name_____

Address_____

City_____

State_____ Zip_____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Revolution & Reaction

The Paris Commune 1871

John Hicks and Robert Tucker, Editors

This collection focuses upon the two-month communal government of Paris. In addition to reprinting a *Massachusetts Review* issue on the Commune, including the first published translation of Bertolt Brecht's *The Days of the Commune*, the book contains new articles and a bibliography. 224 pages, illus., cloth, $10.00

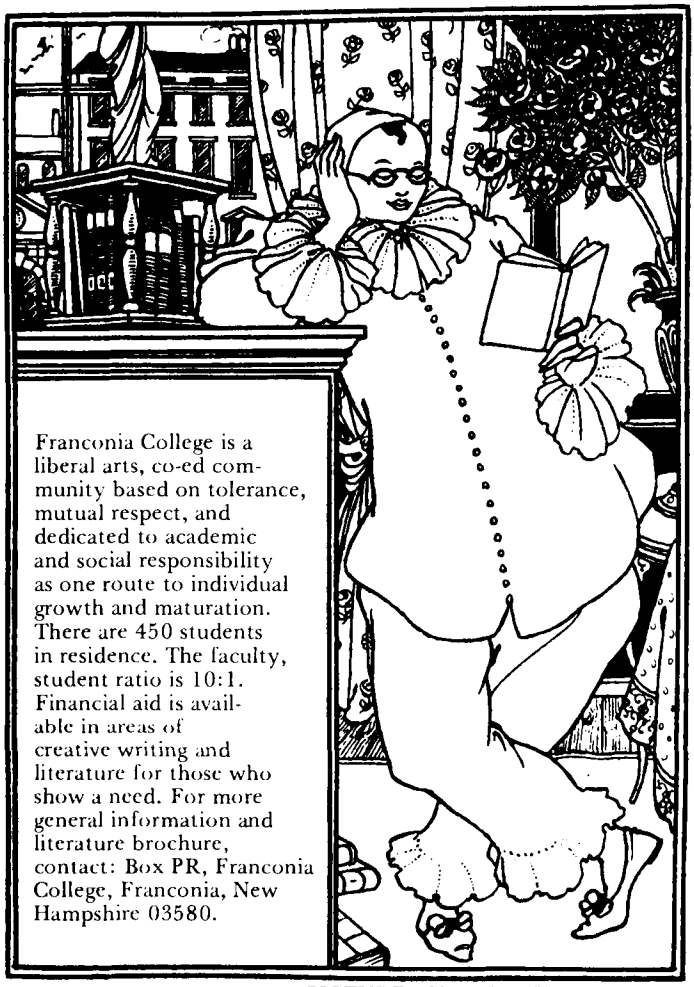
University of Massachusetts Press
Amherst, Massachusetts 01002

front. EL5-8857

back. EL5-9307

reservations . PL9-1650

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Franconia College is a liberal arts, co-ed community based on tolerance, mutual respect, and dedicated to academic and social responsibility as one route to individual growth and maturation. There are 450 students in residence. The faculty, student ratio is 10:1. Financial aid is available in areas of creative writing and literature for those who show a need. For more general information and literature brochure, contact: Box PR, Franconia College, Franconia, New Hampshire 03580.

PICTURE BY AUBREY BEARDSLY

·LITERATURE ·WRITING·

·POETRY ·DRAMA·

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Paris Review Put On

Brand new Paris Review tee shirts.
Navy blue with white lettering
and symbol at only $4.95 apiece.
Sizes: Small, Medium and Large.

THE PARIS REVIEW • 46-39 171 Place • Flushing, N.Y. 11358

Quantity: ☐ Small ☐ Medium ☐ Large @ $4.95

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY.....

STATE..... ZIP.....

PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY ORDER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New from Columbia

LETTERS OF HART CRANE AND HIS FAMILY

THOMAS S.W. LEWIS, Editor

Complete texts of all the extant correspondence between Crane and his mother, father, and maternal grandmother, providing and unparalleled view of the tortured poet's relationship with his family and of the forces which affected his personal and poetic development.

$20.00

AN ESSAY ON POPE

FREDERICK M. KEENER

Here is a significant alternative to previous studies of Alexander Pope. Considering the life and the works together, Keener perceives coherence and development in Pope and sees him as a meaningful figure whose poetry has relevance for the modern reader. **$9.00**

THE ALTAR AND THE CITY

A reading of Virgil's *Aeneid*

MARIO DI CESARE

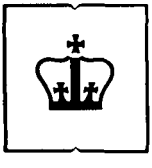
This reading of the **Aeneid** offers a running commentary while developing interpretations sometimes sharply different from previous studies. Readers will find the views controversial, always stimulating, and unfailingly grounded in the poem itself.

Cloth, $12.00; Paper, $5.00

COLUMBIA ESSAYS ON MODERN WRITERS

GEORGE STADE, Series Editor

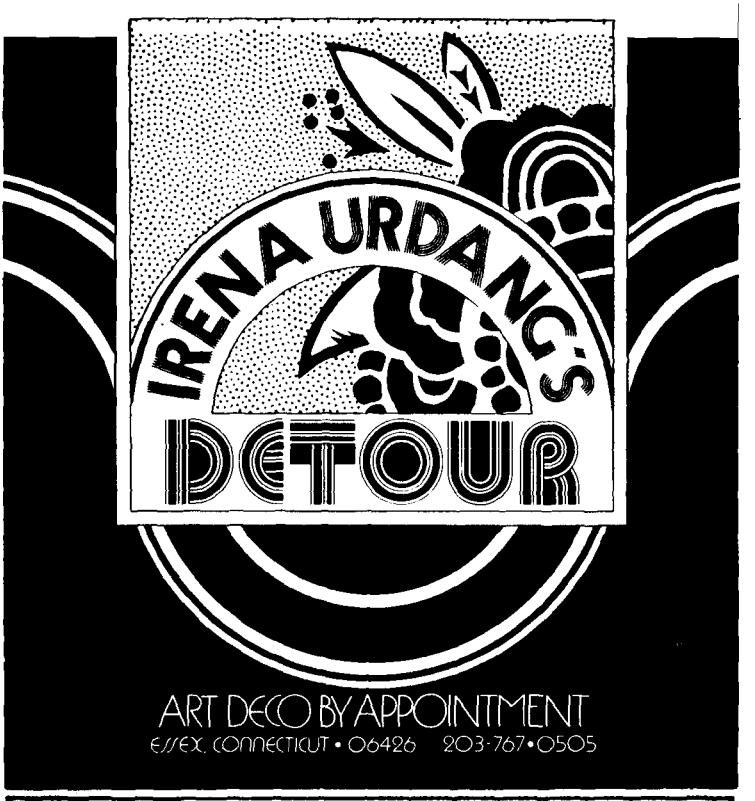
Four new titles in this outstanding series: **Emile Zola**, by Jean-Albert Bede; **Jean Cocteau**, by William Fifield; **Andre Malraux**, by Wilbur M. Frohock; and **Georg Trakl**, by Maire J. Kurrik. **Paperbound, each $1.00**



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

Address for orders: 136 South Broadway, Irvington, New York 10533

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



"The New York Hotel with the endearing qualities (and cuisine) of a Fine Inn."

HOTEL Algonquin
59 West 44th St., New York, N.Y. 10036
Reservations: (212) MU 7-4400

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Paris Review

Publisher Sadruddin Aga Khan
Editors George A. Plimpton, Peter Matthiessen
Donald Hall, Robert B. Silvers
Blair Fuller, Maxine Groffsky
Managing Editor Molly McKaughan
Poetry Editor Michael Benedikt
Art Editor Alexandra Anderson
Art Director Kathleen McCarthy
New York Office Lillian von Nickern
Associate Editors Maggy Paley, Frank H. Crowther
Michael Newman
New York Advertising Fred Fuller
London Advertising Arthur Boyars
Editorial Assistants Rose Styron, Jill Fox, Judi Claremon
Benna Wilde, Debbie Adams, Zaq Moon,
Fayette Hickox
Advisory Editors Nelson Aldrich, Patrick Bowles, Joan Dillon,
William Pene Du Bois, Drue Heinz, John Train,
Harold L. Humes, Ben Johnson, Jonathan Miller,
John Phillips, Thomas H. Guinzburg, Lawrence M.
Bensky, Frederick Seidel, Terry Southern, Max
Steele, Philip Roth, William Styron, Eugene
Walter, Peter Ardery, Christopher Cerf, Tom
Clark, Ron Padgett
Executive Manager Bernard F. Conners
Consultant Harper's Magazine

The Paris Review is published by The Paris Review, Inc.; 8,000 copies. Vol. 15, No. 58, Summer 1974. Office: 45-39 171 Place, Flushing, New York 11358. Distributors in the USA: Eastern News Company and Doubleday & Co.; outside of France & USA: Literary Services and Production Ltd., 2 Denbigh Close, London W 11. Printed in USA by Capital City Press, Montpelier, Vermont.

Price per copy in USA: $1.95; in France 8F; in the UK: 62p. Postpaid subscription for six issues in the USA: $9; in France 47F; in the UK & sterling area: £3.37.

Fiction manuscripts should be submitted to the Flushing office; poetry to Michael Benedikt c/o The Paris Review, 541 East 72nd St., New York City 10021. Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by addressed envelope and stamps or international postage coupons.

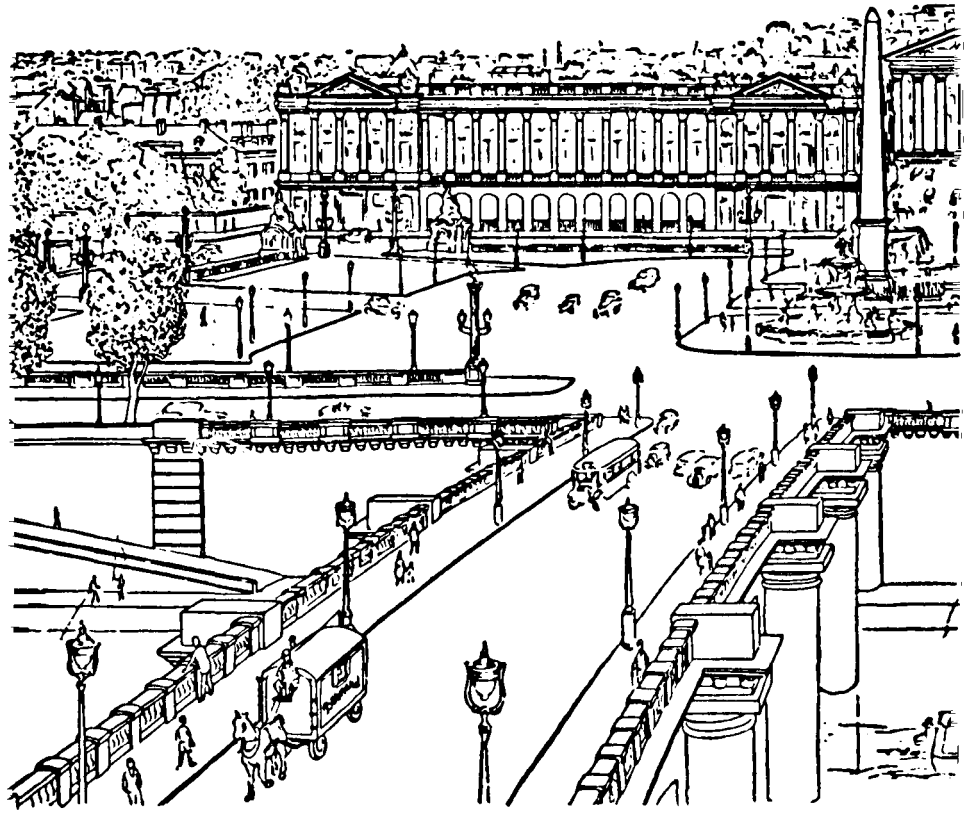
Charter member of the Association of Literary Magazines of America.

Second Class Postage Paid at New York, New York.

©1974 The Paris Review, Inc.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE PARI

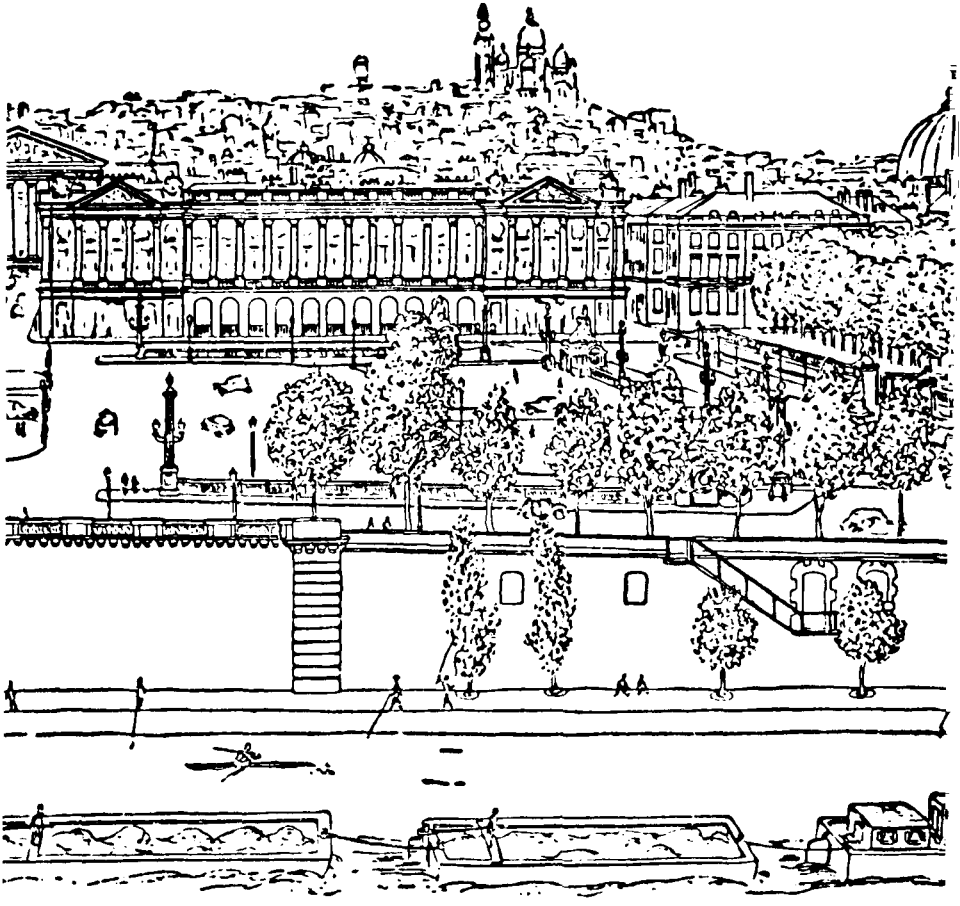


45-39 171 Place
Flushing, New York 11358

Doubleday &
277 Park Ave,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

S REVIEW



Company
New York

Literary Services and Production Ltd.
26 Old Brompton Rd, London SW 7

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Number **58**

Cover by Deborah Remington *"Adelphi Series, 1974"*
Frontispiece by William Pene du Bois

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Interview

Archibald Mac Leish	*The Art of Poetry XVIII*	*52*

Art

Christopher Wilmarth	*Portfolio*	*102*

Prose

Stephanie Eve Bernstein	*Anamnesis*	*133*
Patricia Griffith	*Dust*	*145*
William Harrison	*The Good Ship Erasmus*	*87*
Erik Tarloff	*Flesh, Pleasures of the*	*17*

Poetry

Jon Enroth	*Two Poems*	*118*
Stephen Frank	*Two Poems*	*111*
D.E. Fredd	*The Antibody*	*120*
Gary Gildner	*The Runner*	*129*
Jeff Grinnell	*Study for Two Figures*	*51*
Fanny Howe	*Three Poems*	*46*
Philip Legler	*Sheet-Monger, Blanket-Hoarder*	*85*
Everette H. Maddox	*Three Poems*	*167*
John Mc Kernan	*The Season*	*82*
W .S. Merwin	*Demonstration*	*131*
Frederick Morgan	*Three Poems*	*142*
Robert Phillips	*The Empty Man*	*83*
S.J. Sackett	*Epistemology*	*166*
Ira Sadoff	*Three Poems*	*40*
Richard Shelton	*Three Poems*	*43*
Gerald Stern	*Four Poems*	*113*
Al Young	*Two Poems*	*123*
Alan Zeigler	*Instructions for My Arrival*	*50*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Paris Review
is pleased to announce the winner of
The Aga Khan Prize for Fiction, 1973

Paul West

for

Tan Salaam

The story appeared in issue # 57

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Erik Tarloff

Flesh, Pleasures of the

Why did Paul Flannery prefer to play the field?

Paul liked variety, savored what he vulgarly called "a mixed grill."

Why vulgarly?

Because mixed grill is the name given to a dish, popular in Europe, of a wide choice of meats cooked together in the same pot.

Could you briefly describe Mr. Flannery's appearance?

He was five feet eleven inches tall, one hundred fifty pounds or so. Dark hair. Regular features. In recent years he has sported a moustache.

Could you describe the moustache?

Just a regular moustache.

Handlebars?

No, I'd say the ends were inclined to droop.

Was it bushy?

Not particularly.

The same color as his hair?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Perhaps somewhat lighter.

Continue.

He dressed well. Conservatively, but with flair.

Did he have a tailor?

No, he got his suits off the rack.

Would you, then, to sum up, describe his appearance as attractive?

Yes sir, I would. He was not an Adonis, but he presented an attractive appearance. He was quite presentable.

What was his age?

Thirty-one.

And could you tell us his occupation?

He was an investment counselor.

I beg your pardon?

An investment counselor.

That pays well, doesn't it?

Yes, quite well. Paul made approximately $50,000 a year, which, as a bachelor, he found more than ample.

Good. Now, let's see. To return to the subject. The women Mr. Flannery had his alliances with . . . did they come from a distinctive social stratum?

Oh, it varied.

There was no pattern?

Well . . .

No preponderance?

Well, I suppose there were quite a few secretaries. But also teachers, salesgirls, editorial assistants, script girls, students, women engaged in diverse managerial tasks, researchers, writers (including a remarkable number of poets), musicians, waitresses, topless dancers and other artistes, accountants, computer programmers, and many representatives of the chronically unemployed.

Does this represent a more or less complete list?

No sir. By no means.

Would you be willing to assemble a complete list and submit it to me at your convenience?

Certainly sir, if you wish.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fine. Now, how about appearance?

I'm sorry?

Appearance.

The women?

Yes. Were they generally attractive?

Generally.

But not exclusively?

No sir.

Preponderantly?

That might be a fair characterization.

How about June Cabot, the woman in question? Was she attractive?

No sir, she was not.

She was not?

That is correct.

Would you describe her, please?

She was about five foot three or four inches. I don't really know how to estimate a woman's weight, but she was on the heavy side.

How far on the heavy side?

Not grossly fat.

Pleasingly plump?

No, I don't think that would be an accurate description. It wasn't her overweight, however, so much as a general . . . shapelessness, you'd have to call it.

And her visage?

Her what?

Her features. Her facial characteristics.

She was not pretty.

Was she ugly?

That might be a little strong. She wasn't pretty.

All right. I'm a little bothered. . . it would seem. . . Am I wrong in inferring from what you've said that looks were not important to Mr. Flannery?

He was very conscious of appearance.

That's not exactly what I'm asking.

I don't mean to be evasive. Feminine beauty was impor-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tant to Mr. Flannery. He had a very sharp eye for, a very healthy appreciation of, beautiful eyes, a pert nose, high cheekbones, full and sensuous lips, a shapely neck line, a full or beautifully-shaped bust, a slim waist, a striking pair of buttocks (either saucily large or provocatively tight and smooth), long lean legs, a well-turned ankle, a graceful instep. But he was usually willing to settle for less.

If pretty girls were not available, he would compromise his ideals. Is that what you're trying to say?

Well sir, it's not that simple. I'm sure that's part of it. It may have been that way for Paul once upon a time. But. . . well, that would imply he experienced disappointment if he did not secure the company of a beautiful woman, and this is simply not the case. He was delighted with virtually any woman whose acquaintance he happened to make.

But what about the beautiful jugs and all the rest of it?

Generally he found compensations.

Such as . . . ?

Sir, it's necessary that you understand that Mr. Flannery viewed fucking as an exploration; if you will, an existential exploration.

Is that his phrase?

No, it's my own.

Proceed.

And so, if nothing else, fucking an ugly woman taught him how an ugly woman fucks. But further, it suggested to him what effect the ugliness had on the fucking.

Could you explain further?

Certainly. Some women, to compensate for their ugliness, or as a result of extended deprivation, fucked like demons. Others were so conscious of themselves they were unable to enjoy their good luck.

This sort of thing could also apply to attractive women, could it not?

Oh yes indeed, sir, I'm sure it's never absent. But Mr. Flannery found the effect particularly piquant with the less fortunate. He once spoke to me of the Benjamin

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Franklin essay "On Choosing a Mistress." He said, "Ben didn't really know the half of it, or maybe he was more interested in a good joke than the truth. Maybe some older women will be grateful, but there are plenty of others who will never forgive you."

That's very interesting.

Isn't it?

Yes. Hmm . . . Did Mr. Flannery regard himself as a good lover?

Yes sir, I believe he did.

Did he ever expatiate upon the subject?

He was not a particularly boastful man. I think, if pressed, he would have said simply that he enjoyed sex so much he believed his pleasure to be infectious.

A rather unhappy choice of words.

Indeed. My apologies.

But I believe I take your point. Did he ever experience difficulties or problems?

Sexually?

Sexually.

Oh yes.

For example . . . ?

Temporary impotence.

Temporary?

It almost never lasted more than fifteen minutes or a half hour or so.

How rare was this?

Not rare at all. Quite common, as a matter of fact.

Didn't he find this . . . embarrassing?

Sometimes. He became rather adept at dealing with the problem.

Any other difficulties?

After several acts of intercourse in an evening, he sometimes couldn't come.

Anything else?

He sometimes had the opposite problem, coming too quickly.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Anything else?

I can't think of anything off-hand, no sir. What else is there?

How did he deal with the problem of coming too quickly?

It varied.

Well, tell me one way.

I believe he sometimes said, "I'm sorry, baby, you got me too excited."

That's not bad. However, to proceed. Miss June Cabot. Where did Mr. Flannery make her acquaintance, if I may ask?

Certainly. At a bar.

A bar?

A so-called "singles' bar." Where people go to meet other people.

You mean there are places where unaccompanied women actually go to . . . to get picked up?

Yes sir. Many. It's quite a thriving industry.

And no one feels embarrassed about entering such establishments?

They are regarded as quite respectable.

Is admission granted only to unaccompanied persons?

Oh no. You see, sir, for one thing, often two members of the same sex go together, perhaps to bolster each other's confidence or to help pass the time pleasantly in case nothing develops. And for another . . . well . . .

Yes?

Well, many couples also frequent singles' bars to meet other couples or to find a third partner.

And these places are legal?

Oh yes.

And have liquor licenses?

Most of them.

When I was in the first flush of youth – well, never mind that. So he met her in a singles' bar?

Yes sir.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What first drew him to her?

She was drawn to him, to be precise. She approached him and asked if she could buy him a drink.

Is such a gesture common at these places?

Not uncommon.

And he accepted?

There was no gracious way to refuse.

All right. What were his first impressions of Miss Cabot?

He noted she was unattractive. He found her voice pleasant. Something in her manner – a kind of confidence or presence normally lacking in unattractive women – indicated to him she was probably very intelligent.

How much time did they spend together in the bar?

Just over an hour.

What was the substance of their conversation?

They discussed their backgrounds, their geographical origins, their respective modes of employment –

Excuse me for interrupting, but what was Miss Cabot's mode of employment?

She was a graduate student at UCLA in English literature.

All right. Go on.

They discussed politics, current books, current films, the possibility of common acquaintances.

Did they have any?

They did not. They discussed the bar in which they found themselves. They discussed Los Angeles. They discussed sex.

Who raised the subject of sex?

Miss Cabot.

What exactly did she say?

She said, "Would you like me to suck your cock?"

Out of the blue?

Yes sir, virtually out of the blue. Following a lull in the conversation.

My my. How did Mr. Flannery respond?

He said, "Yes, I'd like that very much."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He did not manifest surprise?

He did not.

Did he feel surprise?

Oh yes sir. Miss Cabot's timing was unexpected.

Had he been preparing to make a proposal of his own?

He had suspected it wouldn't be necessary. And of course it wasn't.

To whose domicile did they repair?

Miss Cabot suggested her apartment. As they had come in separate cars, she wrote down her address for Mr. Flannery.

Did he ever suspect she had written down a false address as a cruel jest?

No sir.

Did Mr. Flannery counter with a suggestion they use his own apartment?

No sir. Miss Cabot seemed eager they go to hers. He suspected she had some reason.

Such as?

Such as possibly pride in its appearance. Such as possibly a collection of . . . of sex devices, or something of that kind.

Was either suspicion justified?

Both.

Could you be more specific?

It was immediately apparent that she had taken great pains to decorate her apartment distinctively. Movie posters, great leafy plants, and exotic pieces of sculpture adorned every available wall, nook, and cranny.

Did Mr. Flannery find the effect pleasing?

He found the effect amusing, yes sir, he found it an imaginative expression of Miss Cabot's personality.

Which he found congenial?

Yes sir.

You mentioned sex devices.

I used the term rather loosely. A king-sized water bed with heater and vibrator, an electronic cordless battery-run

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

plastic vibrator, a collection of glossy color pornographic photographs, and a jar of musk-scented lubricating gel.

Did she show him these all at once as soon as they arrived?

No sir.

What did happen?

She arrived some minutes before Mr. Flannery. When he knocked on her door, she called, "Come in, it's open." He entered the apartment. Miss Cabot was undressed, seated in an easy chair with each leg draped over an arm of the chair.

The effect being to expose her private parts to Mr. Flannery?

Yes sir. Not merely to expose . . . the effect was . . . she seemed to *offer* her private parts to Mr. Flannery.

What was Mr. Flannery's reaction?

He was touched, excited, repelled, attracted, and embarrassed.

What did he do?

He kissed Miss Cabot's proffered genitals.

For an extended period of time?

A minute or so. Then he stood up again. Upon which, Miss Cabot pulled him to her and opened his pants.

Was Mr. Flannery wearing boxer shorts?

Jockey shorts.

White?

Blue. And then she began to fellate Mr. Flannery.

Did he have an erection at this time? Prior to the fellating?

Semi, sir.

Semi?

The process of tumescence had begun, but was not yet completed. Mr. Flannery restrained Miss Cabot and suggested they retire to the bedroom. Miss Cabot did not seem entirely pleased at the interruption, but agreed and led him down the corridor to her bedroom.

Where the act of fellatio continued?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Yes sir.

Did Mr. Flannery undress before they resumed?

Yes.

Did he fold his clothes neatly?

Yes sir. Across the back of a chair.

And then joined Miss Cabot on her heated vibrating water bed?

That is correct.

Did he passively enjoy this experience, or did he reciprocate in some way?

He did not reciprocate. Except . . .

Yes?

Except he stroked her hair and breasts. In order to be doing *something*. You understand, sir.

Did she . . . did she bring him to climax?

Yes sir.

Did he give her a warning that his climax was imminent?

Yes sir.

In what manner?

I believe he said, "Whoops."

Did she thereupon withdraw her mouth?

No, she did not.

She swallowed, then?

Yes sir.

Did Mr. Flannery at any time comment upon her skill at this activity?

Yes sir, he had occasion to praise her expertise.

Was this praise sincere?

From the bottom of his heart.

I see. And then?

She suggested Mr. Flannery satisfy her with the plastic vibrator while he waited for his erection to return. To facilitate this latter, she gave him some pornographic photographs to examine.

She had them handy?

Yes. In a drawer in a small chest by her bed.

And he complied with her suggestion?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Yes.

Willingly?

I suppose one could say so.

Enthusiastically, would you say?

Yes. Enthusiastically.

Did he enjoy the experience?

Not entirely.

Why is that?

He developed a painful muscle cramp in the calf of his left leg. He stopped what he was doing and told her about it, and she massaged his calf until the cramp subsided.

She had not yet had an orgasm?

Not yet.

Was she still excited?

Oh yes. Very much so.

And Mr. Flannery?

His erection returned as the cramp relaxed. A coincidence they both remarked upon with amusement.

Did they therefore engage in sexual intercourse?

No, he resumed stimulating her with the vibrator.

Why?

I'm not really certain. To finish what they had already begun, I suspect. Neither of them, in any event, was surprised.

And this time she did acheive a climax?

Yes sir.

Was this event manifestly evident?

Oh yes sir, manifestly.

I see. What happened then?

Miss Cabot requested that Mr. Flannery kiss her.

Which he did?

Which he did not. He still found her unattractive, and he was additionally repelled by the presence of his own semen in her mouth.

They had not yet in fact kissed all evening, is that right?

That's right.

And how did he manage to avoid kissing her now?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

By diverting her attention elsewhere.

Could you please be more specific?

He showed her one of the photographs she had given him that he found particularly interesting and asked her, "Have you ever tried that?"

And what did the photograph represent?

A woman engaged in normal and anal intercourse with two men simultaneously.

And what did she reply?

She said she had not. Then he asked her if the idea appealed to her.

And did it?

Yes sir, so she said.

I see. Was this followed by . . . by a proposal?

No sir, it was followed by an awkward pause.

Which signified?

Which signified . . . this would have to be speculation on my part.

I am willing to accept it as such.

Which signified the uncertainty about whether a proposal should be made – and, I suppose, who should make it.

I'm still not sure I understand . . .

Well, it's rather difficult for me to explain. It's just – well, it's just that all the peculiar ambiguities of their position seemed underlined by that awkward pause. Would they see each other again? Probably not. Upon what foundation was their physical intimacy based? Upon quicksand. And yet they were discussing and presumably considering . . . well, I guess I'm still not really making myself clear, sir, but it's the unusual juxtaposition of the almost adolescent concern on the first date of whether there will be a second coupled with the contemplation of engaging in an advanced and very intimate sexual aberration. Do you see what I mean?

Not exactly. But I'm willing to pass on to other matters. Now that the specter of anal intercourse had been raised,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

did they engage in it?

No sir. Miss Cabot fetched her lubricating gel and began to apply it to Mr. Flannery's penis.

A propos of anything in particular?

She just told him it would feel good.

Did it?

Yes sir. Aside from its oily consistency, it heated up upon contact with the skin.

Ah.

Yes sir.

Did you happen to know how full the jar . . . it did come in a jar, didn't it?

Yes.

Did you know how full the jar was?

No sir, I'm afraid I don't.

All right. So she applied the gel to Mr. Flannery's penis?

And scrotum.

Really?

Yes sir. And then she applied it to herself.

To herself?

Yes. Mr. Flannery offered to help, but she instructed him to lean back and watch her.

Where exactly did she apply it?

To her nipples, her clitoris, and the general area of her vulva.

Was any applied internally?

Yes sir, some.

Did they then have intercourse?

No sir.

Why not, for heaven's sake?

Mr. Flannery leaned over toward her with that unambiguous purpose, but Miss Cabot stopped him, suggesting they smoke some marijuana first.

She was in possession of marijuana?

Yes sir.

Did Mr. Flannery agree?

Reluctantly. He was already quite aroused, and besides,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he was not himself a particularly avid marijuana user.

Was this perhaps a function of his age?

Quite possibly. His age and social orientation.

Did he disapprove of its use?

He would never have said so.

Does marijuana have an effect on sexual performance or experience?

So it is reported.

Could it be considered an aphrodisiac?

I'm not an expert, but I suspect it could.

Did she have the marijuana handy as well?

No sir, not literally at hand. It was in another room.

So she went to fetch it?

Yes sir.

She went to fetch it. Did Mr. Flannery just lie there waiting?

Not exactly, sir.

Could you speak up?

Not exactly, sir.

Well?

He began to masturbate, sir.

To masturbate?

Not in earnest . . . he just . . . it was just a matter of casually touching himself, you see.

With the intention of bringing himself to climax?

No sir, I'm sure not. It was more a matter of . . . of idling his engine. What musicians call "vamping till ready."

And then Miss Cabot returned?

Yes sir. Quietly. Without his being aware of it. Until she yelled, "Say cheese!"

"Say cheese"?

She had a Polaroid camera, you see. He looked up, rather startled, and a flash bulb suddenly seared his vision.

"Seared his vision"?

I am quoting Mr. Flannery.

In other words, she had taken a photograph of him masturbating, is that what you're saying?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Yes sir.

Was he pleased?

No sir.

Was he extremely displeased?

Not extremely. She had an album, a picture album, which she showed him when she noticed his displeasure. It appeared to be a collection of candid photographs of her other lovers, also lying on her water bed.

Also masturbating?

A few of them.

And this mollified him?

I don't know whether "mollified" is the exact word. It interested him sufficiently so that he allowed his displeasure to lapse.

Approximately how many photographs were there?

Many.

A hundred, would you say?

Perhaps not quite so many.

Seventy-five?

That would be a fair estimate.

And I believe a Polaroid camera develops pictures in a matter of minutes, is that not right? So did she therefore show Mr. Flannery his portrait?

Yes sir. And mounted it in the album.

What was his reaction to this?

He experienced an unfamiliar emotional response which he was unable to name or explain, either at the time or subsequently.

Was it pleasant or unpleasant?

He was unable to say.

Did he examine any of the other pictures?

Yes sir.

In detail?

Some of them.

All right. Now something really puzzles me. In Mr. Flannery's experience, was Miss Cabot's behavior common? By behavior, I mean all of it: the sexual aggressiveness, the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

devices, the marijuana, the camera, the entire business?

No sir, at least in degree, in intensity, it was not common.

It was rare?

It was almost unique.

Okay, good. Now, Mr. Flannery must have had some opinion of all this, some reaction to it.

Well yes, of course. He considered himself very lucky.

Very lucky? That's all?

Yes sir. But you have to understand that Miss Cabot's uniqueness was purely a question of degree. It was not at all rare for a woman to offer marijuana to Mr. Flannery. It was not rare for a woman to own a water bed. It wasn't rare for a woman to express her sexual interest in him. The only thing rare about Miss Cabot was the apparently obsessive, driven quality of her attitude, not its tendency, nor any of its specific manifestations.

He regarded her as merely sexually liberated?

Yes sir.

That doesn't seem to jibe with the words, "obsessive, driven quality," that you just used.

No, well . . . perhaps I am projecting my own present opinion onto Mr. Flannery. I think he simply felt he had struck gold.

"Struck gold"?

Found the perfect one-night stand. Found a woman who shared his drives, and perhaps carried them even farther than he himself.

Okay. Did they then smoke the marijuana?

Yes sir.

Was it already rolled into cigarettes? If not, who performed this task?

They used a water-filled hooka pipe, sir.

Miss Cabot seems to have been fond of gadgets.

Yes sir.

Did they smoke very much?

Yes sir. Several bowls full.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And it was of good quality?

Yes sir, excellent.

And they became quite intoxicated?

Very much so.

Stoned?

That is the term, yes sir.

Turned on?

Turned on, yes, I suppose so.

And then they had sex?

And then Miss Cabot put a record on the phonograph.

She had a phonograph in her bedroom?

Yes sir. She put on a Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers record.

A record of dancing?

Of singing. Songs from their movies. By Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, Richard Rodgers, etc. I believe it was a rather rare recording, rather precious to Miss Cabot.

And then *they had sex?*

And then Miss Cabot talked to Mr. Flannery about the songs and the period they represented.

What was his reaction?

He wasn't interested in the songs. He became impatient.

I should say so. Did he express his impatience?

Physically.

You mean he struck her?

Oh no sir. I mean he fondled her.

In order to get things rolling?

Yes sir.

And did she respond?

She told him he had no soul.

Is that a quotation?

Yes sir. "You have no soul" is precisely what she said.

Did he take umbrage?

He continued to fondle her. She became excited.

And then they had sex?

And then she removed the record from the phonograph. She said, "All right, all right, but not in front of Fred and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ginger." And she got up to remove the record. In the process of lifting the needle – remember, she had smoked a large quantity of marijuana and was also rather aroused – she scratched the record badly. It made a terrible grating sound. She cried "Oh no!" and lifted the record off the turntable very delicately and examined the scratch.

It was bad?

The record was ruined, sir. At least the side she had been playing.

What was Mr. Flannery's reaction?

He said, "Never mind, never mind, come to bed."

Soothingly?

Gruffly.

And what did Miss Cabot do then?

She joined Mr. Flannery on the bed. First she put the record back in its sleeve and then she joined Mr. Flannery on the bed.

I see.

And then Miss Cabot began to cry.

Began to cry?

Yes sir. On Mr. Flannery's chest.

Did he try to console her?

In a manner of speaking.

You mean he resumed fondling her?

Yes sir.

And how did she respond?

Well, it's a curious thing. She became very powerfully aroused, but she continued to sob.

And then they had sex?

Yes sir.

Male superior?

Yes sir.

And Miss Cabot cried during the entire act?

Yes sir.

With tears and everything?

The whole works.

How long did the act last?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Approximately fifteen minutes.

Would you characterize it as passionate and vigorous?

Yes sir.

On both sides?

Yes sir.

Mr. Flannery did not find Miss Cabot's weeping to any extent dampened his ardor?

Apparently not.

Did both partners achieve satisfaction?

Orgasm.

I beg your pardon.

Both partners achieved orgasm.

Are you drawing a distinction between orgasm and satisfaction?

I . . . I'm not really sure, sir.

Well, all right. Then to be phenomenologically precise, both partners achieved orgasm?

Yes sir, they did.

Simultaneously?

Miss Cabot was a few seconds ahead of Mr. Flannery.

Did she then stop weeping?

No sir.

She continued to weep?

Yes sir.

What were Mr. Flannery's feelings about this?

He was perplexed.

But he was not at all moved?

Oh yes, of course.

He was *moved?*

That is correct.

Well, that's reassuring. Did he seek to console Miss Cabot?

He didn't know how to. He told her he was certain the phonograph record could be replaced, but this didn't seem to help. In fact, the very opposite. After that, he was afraid to say much of anything.

But she did eventually stop weeping?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Oh yes sir.

How long after?

How long after they had sex, do you mean?

All right.

I would estimate an hour.

An hour! She was crying for an hour?

Yes sir.

What happened during that time? Did they both remain on the bed?

Mr. Flannery left the room once to urinate.

But other than that?

Yes sir.

Did they both just lie there?

Miss Cabot just lay there. Mr. Flannery passed the time re-examining Miss Cabot's photograph album.

He did not say anything to her?

At one point he asked if there was anything he could do.

How did she reply?

She simply shook her head.

What happened when she stopped weeping?

She left the room. She was gone about fifteen minutes. When she returned, her eyes were still rather puffy, but she seemed much better.

Did Mr. Flannery contemplate leaving at any time?

Yes sir.

I thought he might have. What stopped him?

Well sir, it was after two o'clock in the morning, the bars were all closed, and he didn't like to go home to an empty bed.

All right. What happened after Miss Cabot returned to the bed?

He asked her how she felt. She said she felt fine and apologized for her emotional display. Then she leaned over and began to lick Mr. Flannery's penis.

She what?

She began to —

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

All right, I heard you, I heard you. Did this cause him to have another erection?

He already had one.

He already had one?

Yes, he had been studying her album, and for some reason . . . I don't mean to imply latent homosexuality; I think it was more the *idea* of the book . . .

And so they had sex again?

Yes sir.

Male superior?

Rear entry.

How long did it last this time?

About twenty minutes.

Did they both achieve —?

No sir, neither of them. At some point during the act it became evident to them both that that certain . . . germ of something that makes sex pleasurable was no longer present.

Are you referring to a psychological attitude?

No sir, I'm referring to a specific, localized, physical sensation. At any rate, Mr. Flannery was inclined to keep plugging — it was his experience that that feeling sometimes could be induced to return — but Miss Cabot finally grew impatient or disgusted or exhausted, and she said, "Are you close?" And he said, "Not too much." And she wrenched herself away from him and collapsed on the bed. They both went to sleep soon after.

Was there any further conversation between them?

Not that night.

Not even to say good-night?

No sir.

Was there any further physical contact?

No sir.

And at what time the next morning did Mr. Flannery awake?

Approximately ten-thirty.

Was Miss Cabot beside him?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

No sir. She was not in the room. He found her in the kitchen, in a "rather dumpy" housecoat as he described it, brewing coffee. She asked him if he wanted breakfast, he said no, but asked if he could use her shower. She naturally said yes.

How did he feel at this time?

Slightly groggy, slightly flatulent, slightly sore, with a very bad taste in his mouth. But he also felt rather . . . rather exultant in his body. It's a difficult feeling to describe. He enjoyed walking around the apartment naked. He liked looking down at his distended albeit detumescent penis.

And so he showered?

First he urinated and brushed his teeth.

Brushed his teeth?

He generally carried a little collapsible tooth brush around with him for just such an eventuality as this. After showering, he dressed, leaving off his jacket and tie, and joined Miss Cabot in the kitchen for coffee.

How much longer did he stay?

About twenty minutes.

Did any conversation take place?

He asked for and wrote down her phone number.

Did he actually intend to see her again?

No, it was a matter of etiquette.

And then —?

After finishing his coffee — she made very good coffee, he told me — he said he had to be going. They both rose, and she accompanied him to the door.

How did he take his leave of her?

He thanked her for a wonderful evening.

Did she respond in any way?

She said,"You're welcome." And then he kissed her.

On the lips?

On the cheek.

And then he left?

Yes sir, he got into his car and drove home.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And that was his last contact with Miss Cabot?

Yes sir, his last and his only.

How would you say he rated the experience?

He said it was pleasant, but in terms of its potential slightly disappointing.

That was all?

Yes sir.

He had absolutely nothing further to say?

Not that I can think of.

Well, I don't have any further questions at this time. Needless to say, you are as usual subject to recall should that become necessary.

Yes sir, as usual. And you always know where you can find me.

Yes indeed. Well, thank you for your cooperation. You've been most helpful.

I've tried to do my best, sir.

And we appreciate it. We appreciate it very much.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ira Sadoff

Ad Hominem

This is the year of the suicide.
The year the grass dies
and does not rise again. The year
of the razor. As for the government
that falls, it topples itself.
This year the arsonist burns his own room.
If the lilac blooms, it has its reasons.

Now you know the meaning of lunacy.
You have seen the face of the moon
on your own face, a pallor just that dust.
And how unearthly your dreams have become:
a man balanced on an electric wire,
children drowning in a lake.

So your body becomes an offering
the world cannot take. You spread
your worldly goods on the balcony's edge:
the feathers of a bird, the rabbit's
fur, the ashes from a small cigar.
What you have is not enough.
What you want is something less.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ira Sadoff

Last Meeting

The day begins with a fog
that will not unroll. The weather
is falling everywhere, everywhere
we sit the grass bleeds to the touch.

What we have not yet said will not
get said. When you unzip your dress
a thousand insects run for cover,
the goldenrod breaks into a slow swoon.

Your touch is like the touch
of the wasp undulating in its nest,
your tongue the quick lash
of a mirror breaking on the wrist.

Everything else can wait, but will not.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ira Sadoff

An Open Letter To My Wife

I must confess to everything.
My passion for leeches.
The rose
tatooed to your thighs.
Certain fragrances I cannot mention.
My hatred of symmetries:
the blackbird balanced
on the ear of the cow,
the pig aslant
against the rows of corn.

A certain need to destroy
parts of me that will not grow.
An unnatural fear of strangers.
My greatest ambition has been to pass
through water like the sun through glass.
I would hear music everywhere.

Whatever happened is always hard
to say: I fell out of favor
with my loved ones. I was exposed
to certain unpleasant tasks.
I refused to ask for help.
Then I lost my sense of direction.
Birds flew through me.
Open windows made me leap
from my skin, and the rain
made me weep for days on end.
Now I am like a stone
at the bottom of a canyon.
A voice at the end of a tunnel.

Those who love me still
will never see me otherwise.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Richard Shelton

Prayer to the Virgin in a Cage

Little Mother we are sorry
to keep you in this prison
but if we released you
you would run away

Poor Little Mother
who would care for you
and love you and bring you flowers

the world is very big
and full of evil
and the nights are dark

you would be afraid
with no one to talk to you
or light a small candle for you

and Dear Little Mother do not think
only of yourself your suffering
think also of us
who would we pray to then

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Richard Shelton

Local Knowledge

on December nights
when the rain we needed months ago
is still far off and the wind
gropes through the desert
in search of any tree to hold it

those who live here all year-round
listen to the irresistible
voice of loneliness
and want only to be left alone

some kinds of damage
provide their own defense

local knowledge is to live in a place
and know the place
however barren

we who stay in the ruins are secure
against enemies and friends

if you should see one of us
in the distance as your caravan passes
and if he is ragged and gesturing
do not be mistaken

he is not gesturing for rescue
he is shouting 'go away'

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Richard Shelton

Pain

the biggest bore in town
arrives at my party
as if he were invited

and begins to tell me
the details of what a terrible
time he had getting here

but it was worth it he says
and I know he will be
the last to leave

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fanny Howe

Somewhere

Somewhere between Norway and Ireland
volcanic rocks and glaciers leap from the sea
My map has failed me, I'm there

the boom of my ship knocking
against each obstacle, cones of ice
engraved by gray waves

Blue in our sails shows the sun is somewhere
in the vicinity but will never come
to this particular latitude

or parades of comic and beautiful animals
stricken by my depression There is nothing here

to love This seascape fits exactly with
the geography of my mind:
whatever is close is dangerous

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fanny Howe

My Enemy

My enemy keeps
a bowl of anemones
on my bedside table
and this cruelty
has killed my will
to perform even the duties
of an invalid

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fanny Howe

Original

When you pressed two rings,
the one larger than the other,
into my tongue, you crushed my hunger.
Two brass rings:
ornaments, curatives, punishment,
what's the difference,
pain swims for a microscope.
The rings around Saturn swim too,
a girdle of mist which hurts space.

I had nothing more to say to you either.
There was too much pain
in the region of speech.
Shrimp, lemon, garlic, oil, wine and smoke:
all these given up
for two round ornaments, which clacked
on my tongue like knives of palm.

Even my sex went off.
With the skin of a coconut,
hairy and rough,
I was digging a hole to virtue
in the body of a beast.

It was then,
when you began to despise my purity
and threatened to
tear out the rings in my tongue,
I discovered violence
which lay, like pointed orchids under the scab

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the Earth, in me,
and the violence was good, and better.
Not false
or decorative or additive,
but a fine sensation to follow:
something to suck, to taste, to chaw for.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Alan Zeigler

Instructions for My Arrival

I want you to be waiting
outside your door
and squeal excitedly
as I get out of the cab,
even though you've never seen me before
and didn't know I was coming.
I want you to greet me wordlessly,
letting me know with your eyes
that everything will be all right.
You should lead me up the stairs,
babbling about how much you have
to tell me – there's this there's that
and don't let me forget anything.
Then you should sulk a little,
and, when I finally ask what's wrong,
ask me why I haven't come sooner.
My answer will make you cry and hold me.
We will not have sex that night.
We will touch each other gently,
and fade off to sleep,
whispering how uncommon this all is.
In the morning we will fuck like hell.
Then, as I pack to go,
we will both understand
why it couldn't last.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jeff Grinnell

Study for Two Figures

Molds are made, two figures cast,
their plaster bodies glistening and since
light across a modulated surface
suggests movement, itself
suggesting life, they walk. Amazing?

You walk around them, perusing their
secret inflections, preparing small events
of celebration: a flame, then puffs from red lips,
tumblers that tinkle around a simmering log and,
on Friday, a rented car with a backseat

sunset flickering across their arms
(your eyes lighting up in the shadows).
Now, as then, the lights are low, shadows spill
and a violin spins out yearningly its sloe-eyed sadness,
captivating you, as you stand with a bottle of vin rosé

and a napkin folded across your wrist.
The figures intertwine whispering, chuckling softly,
his eyes glowing, stars streaming from hers, when
suddenly, as if in a small fit of passion,
they kiss (their first) and you purse your lips,

heart rising in anticipation,
only to find at the point of impact a crack,
slowly forming, running down jagged
(what's this?) from the broken lips
to the soft scar of the heart . . . and you know

they will drive off in different cars and that
you must begin again.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Whistler in the Dark

George Barker, British poet,
writes a eulogy of Dylan Thomas,
calls him whistler in the dark
and great because the dark is getting darker.

Is it? Was the dark not always darker?
Have we not always had these silver whistlers?
Listen! ... (?)

That's Chaucer like a bobolink.

I think it's not the darkness, Mr. Barker,
makes for whistling well. I think
perhaps it's knowing how to whistle.
Listen! ...

That's Dylan trilling like a lark.

Archie

Dear George,

Will this do as a manuscript? It doesn't show corrections but it shows me up as a pencil man and, worse still, a slave to the eraser. (Black Wing pencils have erasers which eradicate as clean as time).

As for the lines themselves – they went into a notebook and never came out again because Dylan's death was too great a loss and George Barker's piece was too deeply felt to fool with in a tone like this one.

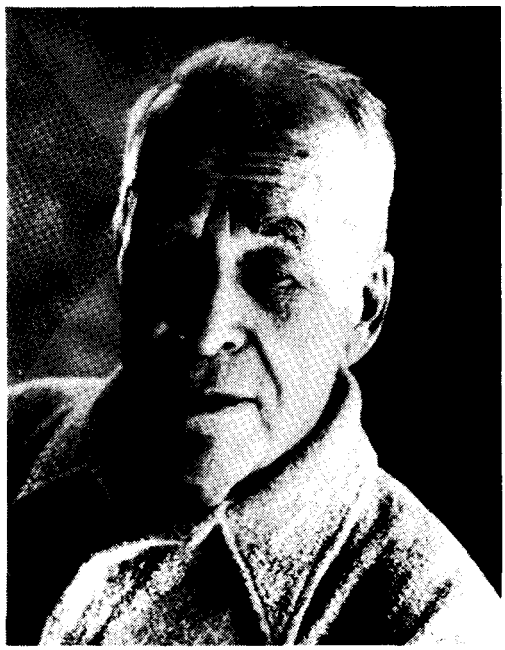
But that's all in the past now. People die too absolutely these days – disappear like pencil marks to an eraser – black wing.

Yours Ever,
Archie

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Art of Poetry XVIII

Archibald MacLeish



Archibald MacLeish winters in Antigua but the bearable portion of the year finds him at Uphill Farm, a country place in Conway, Mass. bought in the twenties on the MacLeishes' return from Europe. The region has meaning for him partly because his mother's family "knew these hills well," partly because an earlier MacLeish had been Congo minister to the settlement until sacked in a dispute about saloon closing hours. (The man was on the wrong — which is to say, the non-permissive — side.) The poet greets his guests in countryman clothes — fine confident head, a manner of kindly command — and leads the way to the pool. The impression everywhere — sharpest in MacLeish's style of talk, but carried no less directly in the domestic

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

arrangements — is of a world well-managed. MacLeish is a short man with bearing — powerful shoulders give good drive to his crawl in the pool. There are drinks outside, souffle, salad and Riesling in a dining room with a mountain view, and some jokes with Mrs. MacLeish, whose voice Joyce praised, about certain of her husband's poems making her out to be U.S. Champion Homemaker and Breadbaker and omitting she sings Poulenc. MacLeish laughs hardest at himself and his wife takes back her complaint charmingly: "I never minded at all." Thereafter a descent down stone stairs to the music room — past a wall of framed honorary degrees, pictures of treasured friends (Felix Frankfurter, for one), a huge photo of the moon (see below). The poet speaks graciously of his hope that someday there'll be a conversation, not just a tape, and then it's time to work.

INTERVIEWER

Can we start outside the gates and work in? You're seen as a writer with unusual experience of the public world — perhaps as a "public man." Is A. MacLeish as a public man recognizable to you?

MACLEISH

No, but I've had him pointed out to me. I suppose all writers have that experience sooner or later — the double personality — the "other" you're supposed to be and can't remember ever having met. Except that in this case the problem is complicated by the fact that those who see me as a "public man" don't always mean it kindly. There are those on the fringes of the art who think that poetry and the public world should be mutually exclusive — as though poets were the internists of the profession and should stick to their bowels. I've been hearing from them for some time. After my tour of public duty during the Second War I published a poem called ACTFIVE which was a kind of report on the look and feel of things "out there". Random

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

House published it and before it appeared Bob Linscott, then an editor at Random House, warned me that I was to be disciplined as a renegade. I didn't believe him but so it turned out. There were no reviews. There were even letters to the *Times about* there being no reviews.

INTERVIEWER

The silence meant somebody thought the "public man" thing had violated the poet?

MACLEISH

Something like that. Though the poem itself, if they had read it, wouldn't have given them much comfort. I suppose it is now the most frequently reprinted – quoted from – of my books. No, it was the usual ideological nonsense: the usual nonsense to which ideology leads unthinking men – even unthinking critics. I don't know how it was with Terence, to whom nothing human was indifferent, but I do know how it is with the practice of the art of poetry. You can't cut off a part of human life by critical fiat and expect your poets to be whole. Poetry is the art of understanding what it is to be alive and a poet isn't alive by quarter-acres or front-feet. He's alive as a man. With a world to live in. No poet down to very recent times – not even the privatest, the most confessional – ever doubted that. And the greatest of recent poets is the most convincing proof that the old poets were right. It was when Yeats broke through the fences around the Lake Isle of Inisfree and took to ranging the public world of Ireland that he became what he became. Discovering his time he discovered himself. And what was true for Yeats in 1914 is even truer for us in the angry and bewildered world we live in. Take away a poet's public life by critical edict in a time like ours and what do you leave him? Not, certainly, himself.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

INTERVIEWER

But staying in touch with the whole self is tough work, isn't it, if you're trying to make reasonable words in the media about Apollo Eight or the Pentagon Papers? You don't feel squeezed?

MACLEISH

Tougher, you mean, than keeping in touch with the *whole* self when you're writing about a private part of your experience? It isn't the subject that betrays a writer but the way he takes the subject. Rhetoric, in the bad sense of that abused word, is just as bad in confessional writing as it is out in the open air. What matters in either case is the truth of the feeling – the feel of the truth. If you can break through the confusion of words about a political crisis like the Pentagon Papers to the human fact – such as the human reality of an Attorney General's behavior – you have *written* the experience. And the fact that the writing appears in the *New York Times* won't change that fact for better or worse. Journalism also has its uses – and to poets as well as to journalists. You spoke of the Apollo flight – the first circumnavigation of the moon – the one that produced that now familiar, but still miraculous, photograph of the earth seen off beyond the threshold of the moon . . . "small and blue and beautiful in that eternal silence where it floats." This was one of the great revolutionary moments of the human consciousness but the moment was not explicit in the photograph nor in the newspaper accounts of the voyage. Only the imagination could recognize it – make imaginative sense of it. Are we seriously to be told that the imagination has no role to play here because the event is in the newspapers? Or is it the publication in the newspapers of the imaginative labor which offends?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

INTERVIEWER

The way the writer "takes the subject," that depends a lot on what the writer knows about it, right? – how far around and in he's been? Can I ask about the uses of public range, social reference, all that? Is there a way of getting beyond the cliché about "the value of the experience," saying something true about how general knowledge ought to sit in a writer?

MACLEISH

I don't know that anything as essential as experience can ever be a cliché, even when parroted in the way you mean. You have to live to write in more senses than one, and no one can ever live enough – there will always be cracks in the knowledge and they will always show. But we have been talking about this rather factitious distinction between the public world and the private world and that does raise the question of knowledge of the public world. Well, there is one thing you can say about that because poetry has said it over and over from the first beginnings. One of the dimensions of great poetry – one of the dimensions by which poetry becomes great – is precisely the public dimension: that vast landscape off beyond – the human background – total human background – what we call "the world." It is there in Shakespeare: even in *Hamlet*, the most inward of the great plays, Denmark is behind the scene – beyond the garden where the king is murdered. And so too, obviously, of Dante: Dante's Hell is under Italy – actual Italy – historic Italy. As Homer's Troy, Homer's Aegean, contains the poems. So Tu Fu's China. So the Thebes of *Oedipus. Oedipus Rex* is, I suppose, by common agreement, one of the keys to the secret human heart but what would the play be without Thebes?

The Greeks regarded what we call "public" experience as part of *human* experience. That's what a man was: he was a member of his city. And if he was a poet he was a *poet* who was a member of his city. This is what gives such

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ground and scope and humanity to Greek poetry at its greatest. The Greek poets knew what a city was *to them* – what a war was – a people. They *knew*. Compare them with Pound. I have great admiration for Pound: he is aware of the city, of the well-ordered state, of the long tradition – the enduring ethic. But he doesn't *know*. He hasn't been there. And it shows. Carl Sandburg was one of the few contemporary poets who was able to take the state in his stride. Perhaps he took it in too easy a stride: Edmund Wilson thought so – you remember his contemptuous dismissal. But Carl will have the last word there. This is perhaps one way of answering the question: that a man who excludes, who really – not perhaps wilfully or explicitly but by subconscious habit, by conforming unthinkingly to the current fashion – *excludes* the public part of his experience is apt to end up finding himself excluded. We talk about the play within the play: there is also a play *without* the play – which contains everything.

INTERVIEWER

What about the question of work-life and art-life – say in Stevens? Poetry here, business there. Aren't we headed into a time when there's a demand that a writer get himself wholly together – *mean* it across the board? He'll be hung for fraud if he finds a condition of marginality acceptable for poetry?

MACLEISH

Wallace Stevens "meant it": the fact that he had a living to earn affected that no more than it affected Shakespeare. Stevens was the head, as I understood it, of the whole trial operation of the Hartford Accident, with lawyers all over the country trying cases for him. He tried very few cases himself but he oversaw the trying of cases and was helpful and very intelligent, a good lawyer and useful and a well-paid officer of the Hartford Accident. I think very well paid. In other words, his life, his professional life, what

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

you called his work-life, was successful. His poetry was something else. The trying of cases, the defending of who run over a child and so forth, never, *as such*, enters his poetry. It might have if he had had a little streak of Masters in him. It might have, but it didn't. His metaphysical mind escaped — and escaped is the right word — escaped out of Hartford Accident into those deeper and deeper examinations of the metaphysical universe. So that the question with Stevens isn't really a question of public against private because his business life was private also. I don't think he was ever interested in a political question in his life. I never heard him mention one. But he is a perfect example — perhaps the most successful and admirable example — of a man who made a go of poetry *and* business. Your word is the right one. Poetry and business in the modern world. I never made a go of it. I tried everything from the law through journalism and government service to teaching at Harvard, and for each one I had to pay a price. Stevens made the art and the work go together. He fitted them together. He had, as you say, carefully planned work habits. Does this have anything to do with the "marginality" of poetry in contemporary life? I don't think so. I think it has to do with the "marginality" of poetry in *Stevens'* life. In terms of the hours of his life poetry was necessarily pushed to the margin. But in the margin it *was* his life. And it was superb poetry. Not in a relative sense: superb *as* poetry. Nothing else matters. Nothing matters with any man but the work. The rest is biography.

INTERVIEWER

Everyman his own margin-maker, is that it? I mean, Every poet . . .

MACLEISH

We look back at Mr. W. S. and we say to ourselves, well we don't know much about him. We know he was an actor. Anyway he supported himself somehow or other in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the theater. Shall we say the theater makes poetry marginal except when Mr. W. S. practices it? Shall we make a distinction between a poet supported by patrons (or, in the contemporary world, by poetry audiences) and a poet who supports himself? Is the second "marginal" whereas the first isn't? Because the first is free to devote all his time to writing? But is he? He usually has to please his patron and that can be fairly time-consuming. The truth is that neither you nor I have ever known a poet who wasn't more or less in that situation – who wasn't with the left hand trying to store up enough birdseed so he could go on with the right hand and write some poetry.

INTERVIEWER

Marginal or not, the theater is a cooperative enterprise. It forces the writer into a public situation. How do you feel about losing control? Is that a special hell?

MACLEISH

It could be, I suppose. I have had two very different approaches to Broadway production. In the first I had no intention of a Broadway production whatever. I wrote *J.B.* because I had a theme that wouldn't leave me alone. I knew that it had to be a verse play and that was about all I knew to begin with. So I wrote it as a verse play and published the first part of it in the *Saturday Review* and the finished poem with my publishers, Houghton Mifflin. I thought that was the end of it. It never occurred to me that anybody would want to produce it. Then Curt Canfield who was Dean of the Yale Drama School said he wanted to produce it at Yale. I said "fine, great." No changes of any kind except some cuts for length. Don Oenschlager designed the set – very handsome – and Curt directed with student actors and we opened. Brooks Atkinson came up to see it, and reviewed it in the *Times* and the next morning nine producers were on the telephone. Alfred deLiagre, with more courage, I thought, than sound

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sense, took it on and he interested Gadge Kazan, who was the great director of the generation. Gadge came up here during the summer and he and I spent weeks in this room going over and over the play. Still very little rewriting – almost none. Things for purposes of stage continuity. The real problems occurred during try-out in Washington. In other words I was deep in a Broadway production before I rightly realized that I was headed for Broadway. It was in Washington we discovered that we had no "end" – that the end of the play had to be reconceived. But even then I did not "lose control" of the play. By this time Gadge and I were closer than brothers – communicated almost without words. We both knew the end was wrong but what to do about it was my problem. So I rewrote the end of the play and rewrote it and rewrote it, and was very unhappy about it. And then we opened in New York. The publicity people were in a terrible situation. They had a verse play on a biblical theme in their hands. And as if that wasn't enough the newspapers were struck, so that everything was against us. Well, what happened was that we ran on Broadway for a year.

INTERVIEWER

And weren't ground up in a machine.

MACLEISH

Nor was I in the second Broadway play, *Scratch*, though *Scratch* was a Broadway project from the start. By which I mean that it began not with a play but with a producer. Stuart Ostrow wanted to make a musical out of Steve Benet's short story, the *Devil and Daniel Webster*, with Bob Dylan and me as the concocters. I had little interest in that and less and less, the more I heard of it, but eventually I became excited about a straight play based on Steve's story, or what lay behind it, and Ostrow, when he read the first draft, gave up the idea of the musical. *Scratch*, in other words, was written not only *for* the Broadway stage

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but practically *on* the Broadway stage. And yet, even so, I never felt I had lost control. It was a joint undertaking certainly — producer, director, actors, playwright — but the theme was mine from the start and the words were always mine — the play.

But if I were to generalize about this, I think I'd say *J.B.* was right and *Scratch* was wrong — wrong I mean *for me*. For a man who is primarily not a playwright, not a theater hand, to start out on Broadway is probably a mistake, Broadway being what it has become in the last ten years. If I were ever to write a play again — which I won't — I'd start with a play as I did in *J.B.*, get it produced, if I could, in one of the fine repertory theaters outside New York and keep it outside until it was ready for the buzzards.

INTERVIEWER

That implies self-restraint. Where do you buy it in a culture that teaches writers they "personally" matter? Can you say anything about that?

MACLEISH

I don't know if there is anything I can say about it, but by God something ought to be said. Let me begin with two people whom I knew; one very well and one quite well: Ernest Hemingway and Scott Fitzgerald. The tragedy, and it is a tragedy, of Hemingway's fame, is that his life and his dramatization of himself have been built up, not by him, or let me say, not altogether by him, to such a point that the myth of the man is more important than the achievement — the work. And the same thing is true of Scott, Scott having done less about dramatizing himself, but having had more done for him. In each case the *literary figure* — Capital "L", Capital "F" — has been so blown up, so exaggerated, that the work has been diminished. You would know better than I how permanently, but in any case damage has been done. And the same thing is true of Robert Frost. Robert was himself the villain there, be-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cause, as anybody who knew him knows, he worked very hard at his own reputation even when he had no need to — when his greatness was acknowledged. This was damaging only to him. But the real question is what you do about this sort of thing. I don't know that pontificating about it does any good. My own conviction is that the literary person as such just doesn't count — doesn't matter. Some are interesting and some are dull. The only thing that matters is the work. And the amplification of the amplifying device, which is the man himself, is not good for the art of writing, is not good for the writer, is not good. Ernest used to love to come up and go to the night clubs in New York. Why? To be recognized? But, for God's sake, he had been recognized in better ways before. I am not throwing off on Ernest. He is still the great prose stylist of the century. But if ever there was a cult of personality . . . ! Well, the one thing a young writer ought to swear to on his sword never to do is never to dramatize himself whatever he may want to do about his work.

INTERVIEWER

What are the other dangers a writer might be wise to look out for?

MACLEISH

Innumerable, of course, like all the ills humanity is heir to, but self-dramatization will stand for a lot of them. The essential is not to think of one's self as a writer and to do nothing which will put one's self in that popinjay attitude. You don't write as a writer, you write as a man — a man with a certain hard-earned skill in the use of words — a particular, and particularly naked, consciousness of human life, of the human tragedy and triumph — a man who is moved by human life, who cannot take it for granted. Donne was speaking of all this when he told his congregation not to ask for whom the bell tolls. His learned listeners thought he was speaking as a divine — as a stoic. He was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

speaking from his poet's heart: he meant that when *he* heard the bell *he* died. It's all in Keats' letters — that writer's bible which every young man or woman with this most dangerous of lives before him should be set to read. Keats is already a poet in these letters — he is certain, in spite of the reviewers, that he will be among the English poets at his death. But they are not the letters of a poet. They are the letters of a boy, a young man, who will write great poems. Who never postures. Who laughs at himself and who, when he holds his dying brother in his arms, thinks of his dying brother — not the pathos of the scene. You can put it down, I think as gospel that a self-advertising writer is always a self-extinguished writer. Why do anonymous writers speak to us most directly? Why are the old, old writers — the old Chinese and the vanished Greeks most truly ours?

INTERVIEWER

What about the company a writer *does* keep. Does it matter?

MACLEISH

I don't suppose anything matters more. The subject of art is life. You learn life by living it. And you don't live it alone — even on Walden Pond — as *Walden* proves on every page. You live it with and by people — yourself in your relation with people: with and by living things — yourself in your relation to living things. The mistake is Scott Fitzgerald's mistake for example — to lump all this as something called "experience" and to put yourself outside it looking in like a kind of glorified journalist of the ultimate reality. Scott dancing around the dance-floor beside a couple of pederasts asking them intimate questions as though the answers would be answers. Ernest's urgent feeling that he had to know all sorts and kinds as though he were still a reporter for the Kansas City Star. What you really have to know is one — yourself. And the only way

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

you can know that one is in the mirror of the others. And the only way you can see into the mirror of the others is by love or its opposite – by profound emotion. Certainly not by curiosity – by dancing around asking – looking – making notes. You have to *live* relationships to *know*. Which is why a lifetime marriage with a woman you love is a great gift and five marriages in a raddled row is a disaster to everyone including the marrier. The great luck – the immeasurable luck – for a man trying to write the poem of his life is to have known good men and women and to have loved them well enough to learn the differences from himself. It won't guarantee the poem will get written but it is immeasurable luck. A Jim Agee. A B. Hand. A Mark Van Doren. Felix Frankfurter. Jack Bate. Mac Bundy. Carl Sandburg. Dean Acheson . . . my wife.

INTERVIEWER

What about writers as friends? Easy friends, I mean. Can the relation be other than competitive? I remember your story about travelling out to Montana when Hemingway had that car accident.

MACLEISH

You mean Hemingway's remark that I had come out to watch him die? You can't generalize from Hemingway. He knew I'd come at considerable cost and inconvenience (travel on Northwest Airlines in those days was anything but a pleasure) and it embarrassed him. Also he had grown his first beard – the first I saw, anyway – and looked like anything but a dying man; Pauline had to fight the nurses out of the room. But to answer your question . . . my own observation had been that writers can be "easy friends" and often are – but not as writers. Mark Van Doren and I are the easiest of friends. Hemingway and I were friends – close friends – I won't lean on the "easy" – from '24 or '25 until along in the Thirties. Dos was a close friend always. So was John Peale Bishop. But these were – are –

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

human friendships, friendships between men, not literary friendships. Reading Scott Fitzgerald's letters to Ernest is illuminating in this connection: you see at once what was wrong with that friendship. Scott writes as a writer. And in friendship, in human relations, in life, there is no such thing as a writer: there is merely a *man* who sometimes writes. I can't imagine anything shallower than a friendship based on a common interest in the production of literature. *Look* at those letters of Scott's! They throw light on Scott's novels, sure, but on the relation of two remarkable men . . .?

INTERVIEWER

What are the prices? What are the necessary disciplines of writing?

MACLEISH

The first discipline is the realization that there *is* a discipline – that all art begins and ends with discipline – that any art is first and foremost a craft. We have gone far enough on the road to self-indulgence now to know that. The man who announces to the world that he is going to "do his thing" is like the amateur on the high diving platform who flings himself into the void shouting at the judges that he is going to do whatever comes naturally. He will land on his ass. Naturally. You'd think, to listen to the loudspeakers which surround us, that no man had ever tried to "do his thing" before. Every poet worth reading has, but those really worth reading have understood that to do your thing you have to learn first what your thing is and second how to go about doing it. The first is learned by the difficult labor of living, the second by the endless discipline of writing and rewriting and rerewriting. There are no short cuts. Young writers a while back, misreading Bill Williams, decided to ignore the fact that poems are made of words as sounds as well as of words as signs – decided not to learn the art of words as sounds – not to be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bothered with it. They were not interested in poems. They were interested in doing their thing. They did – and that was that.

INTERVIEWER

Who do you read now? Who counts?

MACLEISH

Read for pleasure or read from necessity? I suppose I read for pleasure as everyone else does – what comes along. What's "new" as Ezra used to say. (Not much *is* that says it is but one always hopes.) But necessity is something else. You *have* to read in order to write, no matter what you pretend to yourself. Art is a seamless web and we all latch into it where we find a loose end. But the problem is to find the connection. And hence the necessity. What astonishes me about myself is that my necessities haven't changed over fifty years. You would think they'd have to in a time like this but they don't. Robert Frost is out of fashion – or so they tell me – but fashion is irrelevant: Robert is still what he always was and still necessary to me. So, even more, is Yeats. So is Perse. So is Pound. Eliot. That particular, unique and irreplaceable tone – timbre – of Carl Sandburg. And back of the men of my own time the necessity leads by the same curious – Oh, it is curious enough – path: Hopkins, Rilke, Rimbaud, Emily, Emerson, Keats, Milton, Donne, and so to the great inland ocean of Shakespeare and back of that to Chaucer and Dante and the Greeks and off around the world to Li Po and Tu Fu. No pattern I or anyone else can see but all of it somehow making a whole – all of it *necessary*. Necessary as bread. More than bread – water. Still. Fifty years later.

INTERVIEWER

Fifty years ago means the Twenties. You have reason to remember the Twenties, why does everyone else want to? Why all this nagging of that time?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MACLEISH

No idea. From any point of view, the decade of the twenties was a terrible decade; it was self-indulgent, it was fat, it was rich, it was full of the most loathsome kinds of open and flagrant money-making. All the worst aspects of the French came out as the franc dropped. And yet that decade in Paris was perfect. I suppose it was the right period for *us*. Because of the war, I was a lot older than I should have been to do what I was doing – trying to learn an art. But I was trying to do it alone which is the best way to try to do it and I was living in a city where you could *be* alone without ever being lonely and I had Ada with me. She – I don't need to tell *you* – was a singer. A lovely singer with a beautiful, clear, high voice and a superb musician. She was going great guns singing new songs for Stravinsky and Poulenc and Copland. So we were right in the middle of the most exciting period in almost a century of music. Also the people who drifted along, Ernest, Dos, Scott, Gerald Murphy – above all, the Murphys – were people of extraordinary interest who were also – or became most of them – close friends. I can see why this still interests *me* – I love to go back to it in my mind – but why anybody else forty, fifty, sixty years younger should be interested in it I just don't understand.

INTERVIEWER

What was the special pull of the Murphys? Why did they give up that mode of life? Did Gerald Murphy's friends try to persuade him to stick to the arts?

MACLEISH

Three questions. The last two are tragically easy to answer. Gerald gave up painting when his youngest child, Patrick, who had had tuberculosis and, he thought, recovered, became ill again. Gerald wasn't Irish for nothing. He bore the stigmata – including the deep Puritan wound which afflicts Irish Catholicism and distinguishes the Gaels

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Eire from the Gaels of the Scottish islands in the Hebrides. Gerald took that second (and fatal) illness as a judgment on himself. He hadn't "earned" the right to art. When, after the agony was over, the Murphys settled in New York, Gerald threw everything out of his room but the bed and a chair – white plaster walls, a white bed and chair. Did his friends try to dissuade him? How could they? And yet I remember an ambiguous scene. A Paris concert hall. An "occasion" of some kind: the Murphys are in a box and Ada and I with them. Picasso appears in front of the box looking at Gerald – smiling at him. Gerald stares over his head. Picasso turns away. But I am not answering your questions. Why did they give up "that mode of life"? It was the other way around. Their older son, Baoth, who had always been well, happy, a golden child, died suddenly, brutally, at sixteen. Then Patrick – an extraordinary human being – "un monsieur" as Picasso said, "qui est par hazard un enfant" – died after years of dying – also at sixteen. Then there were the consequences of all that doctoring and hospitalization – years in Montana Vermala, in the Adirondacks – Depression income. Their money was all but gone. They had never been "rich" by American standards but they had always spent money as though they were, having a blithe contempt for money as such – a healthy conviction that money should be used for the purposes of life, the living of life, the defeat of illness and death. One has to pay for a faith like that and Gerald and Sara paid without a whimper. He went back to Mark Cross, the business his father had founded. I never heard him complain of anything except the boredom. But he put up with that, supported his wife and daughter, saved his sister's holdings and made Mark Cross, for a few, vivid years, a creative enterprise . . . not necessarily profitable, but real. "Merchant prince" he used to call himself in those days, mocking his life. But when he was dying (of cancer) René d'Harnoncourt, then the head of the Museum of Modern Art, told me I might tell him the Museum had

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

accepted his *Pear and Wasp* for its permanent collection. I feel sure he died thinking of himself as a painter. He should have. He was a painter. And a man. A man who loved life and learned how to live it. And how to die – something not all men learned even in that generation.

That or something like it would be the answer to your first question – the "special pull," I think you said. No one has even been able quite to define it. Scott tried in *Tender is the Night*. Dos tried in more direct terms. Ernest tried by not trying. I wrote a *Sketch For a Portrait of Madame G. M.*, a longish poem. They escaped us all. There was a shine to life wherever they were: not a decorative *added* value but a kind of revelation of inherent loveliness as though custom and habit had been wiped away and the thing itself was, for an instant, *seen*. Don't ask me how.

INTERVIEWER

Did the Americans in Paris in the Twenties know who they were? Was there any sense among them that what they were doing would have overwhelming impact before they were through?

MACLEISH

I can only answer for myself – what I saw and heard. Everyone was aware, I think, that work was being produced in Paris which was magnificent by any standard. This was true of all the arts – the arts generally – the arts as practiced by artists of many nationalities: French, Spanish, Russian, Irish, German, Greek, Austrian. We knew we belonged to a great – a greatly creative generation: that we lived in a generative time. Everything seemed possible – *was* possible. To be young in a time like that was incredible luck – to be young and in Paris. That much is certain: the witnesses are innumerable. But when you narrow the circle to the American the answers are not so easy. American letters at the turn of the century had reached something which looked to my generation like rock bottom,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and the achievements of Eliot and Pound during and after the First War, though they had raised our hearts, had not wholly persuaded us that *we* belonged in this great resurgence of all the arts which was evident in Paris – this world resurgence of great art. So our excitement, real enough, was a little hesitant, a little tentative. Hemingway's *In Our Time* was the first solid American proof to appear on the Seine – proof that a master of English prose had established himself and that this master was indubitably American – American not only by blood but by eye and ear. But *In Our Time* was a collection of short stories. Would there be a great novel? A great *American* novel? We didn't know in Paris in the Twenties. We only knew anything was possible.

INTERVIEWER

In that Twenties community how much exchange of ideas went on . . . reading of each other's manuscripts, advice sought and given . . . ?

MACLEISH

None. None so far as I was concerned. I met Hemingway a year or so after we got to Paris and Gerald Murphy about the same time . . . Dos, Estlyn Cummings, Bishop, Scott . . . but there was no "community" in the sense in which you, I think, are using the word. No Americans-in-Paris community. That notion is a myth concocted after the event by critics with fish to fry. There was the literary-tourist world of the Dôme and the Rotonde but no work came out of that. The real "community" was of course Paris – the Paris of Valery and Fargue and Larbaud – the world center of art which had drawn Picasso from abroad and Juan Gris and Stravinsky and all the rest of that great international generation including, first and foremost, Joyce. The world center of poetry which held Alexis Leger down at the Quai D'Orsay in his anonymity as St. J. Perse. That community – real community – drew and sustained

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the young Americans who lived in Paris in those years but they didn't belong to it nor did they communicate with it except to watch and wonder like the rest of the world. I knew Fargue and Larbaud, and Jules Romain through Adrienne Monnier. Alexis Leger became a close friend many years afterward when all this was gone and Paris was a Nazi slum. I knew Joyce and marvelled at him. But I was not part of *that* Paris nor were any Americans I knew with the possible exceptions of Tom Eliot and Ezra Pound who sometimes appeared. In a touching letter toward the end of his life Scott speaks of "the last American season" in Paris. If there ever was an "American season" in Paris in the Twenties Paris was not aware of it. Nor, I think, was anyone else.

INTERVIEWER

Can I try Instant Analysis about why we're so interested in that time, that romance? Part of what the period means, part of the reason people come back to it, is that the glamour is forgivable in a way that glamour isn't forgivable now. People could live as they lived without the sense that all around was an active enmity to their values, their standards, their way of perceiving. In a sense going back to the Twenties — you called it that "self-indulgent" time — is trying to find a release from the pressure of justifiable hostility. Possible?

MACLEISH

I'm not sure I'd use the word "glamour" — not, certainly, of *our* life, Ada's and mine. But there was a certain relaxation. We were all of us out of that "worst of wars." Ernest had been shot up. Scott had not really been involved in it but that was tragedy too. I had had a year of it in France. My brother had been killed. Almost everybody that we saw — certainly all the French and all the English in Paris at that time — had lived through it. So the whole city gave off a sense that you had something coming to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

you – just what, you never asked . . . or learned.

INTERVIEWER

You were talking at lunch about people perceiving themselves as images of themselves rather than as genuine functions in the world and so on. Do you think that being a writer now is essentially a different kind of act from what it once was, a different kind of performance?

MACLEISH

Not "essentially" – essentially there is only one life a writer can live. But different – yes. Because the world is different. The economic "reality" is different. The Republic doesn't have the self-generated surge forward that it seemed to have a generation ago. We've come in out of the dream and we have to think about the world we see around us – do something about it – at least be sensitive to it. Which means, be sensitive to it *as* poets. And yet all the time and in spite of the changes in the world – the rapid and incoherent changes – the question at the center, the poet's question, remains the same: who am I? The figures out on the lawn playing croquet have changed. They are not playing croquet anymore. They aren't dressed as they once were and there's somebody with a gun back of the bush. But the question remains. So that the problem is to answer the old question in a new scene, a new setting, with other angles of light, refractions of sound, shadows moving – but still, somehow, to answer it.

INTERVIEWER

So writing now is different. But more difficult?

MACLEISH

Well, I have just had the experience, as I've said, of writing a play – *Scratch* – the whole purpose of which was to try to find out what has become of the Republic in this new world we've been talking about. I found the critic

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the *Times*, who exercises the power of life and death in the New York theater, totally impenetrable by this idea, buttoned up, occluded. He simply didn't understand what was being said on the stage twenty feet in front of him. Which suggests to me that the problem of writing about the public world may have become more difficult than it was forty years ago. Or perhaps it is only the problem of getting through that particular infarct to the live audience behind him.

INTERVIEWER

I remember when you were teaching you were strong for "alive" and "living" as "critical terms." What are the referents anyway? What gives the edge?

MACLEISH

To start negatively, "alive" is what is not "literary." Or, in positive terms, what has a speaker – a voice. No writing is alive which is merely *written*. Donne, for example. Why is Donne so *present*? Why is Hopkins so much Hopkins? Or Cummings? Or Mark Van Doren? Or Agee? Cal Lowell? Wilbur? Not because they write well but because they *speak*. Each with his own voice. There's a man there – a woman – Emily. The lawyers have a useful word – "fungible." Wheat is fungible: substitute one bushel for another. Poets can't be substituted. Each has his own – let's call it breath – except that it goes on and on with the words – doesn't end with the man. So that the words remain *his*. And alive.

INTERVIEWER

Breath?

MACLEISH

Well, the use of the language. The *way* a man *uses* it. You don't choose a word if you're a writer as a golf pro chooses a club with the *shot* in mind. You choose it with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

yourself in mind – *your* needs – *your* passions – feelings. It has to carry the green, yes, but it must also carry *you*. Not only your "meaning" but you yourself meaning it. You're quite right – this does seem to me the fundamental criterion in the use of language as material for art. You *create* your words in choosing them. You make them yours -- spoken with your breath. Youngsters tend to think the trick is to break down the syntax – be careless – write the way they think they talk. Nothing could be farther from the truth. To make a word your own is a year's labor – maybe a life's.

INTERVIEWER

The MacLeish poems I like best give this sense that metaphors are racing and expending energy fiercely – the edge of a moment. "Cook County," "You, Andrew Marvell," "The Genius" – for example. Did they come in a rush?

MACLEISH

Those are golden words: I shouldn't let myself think about them. Because even at my age a man shouldn't let himself believe what he most wants to believe. You delight me by saying some of my poems sound as though they had come in a rush but none of them have with the exception of "You, Andrew Marvell" which was there at the end of a morning and finished by night. I am sure – I mean I am not sure at all but I believe – the master poets must come at their poems as a hawk on a pigeon in one dive. I can't. I chip away like a stone mason who has got it into his head that there is a pigeon in that block of marble. But there's a delight in the chipping. At least there's a delight in it when your hunch that the pigeon in there is stronger than you are – carries you along. There is no straining then nor *are* you strained – all assurance and confidence. Oh, you can be fooled of course – there may be nothing there but a stone. But until you are . . .

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I said something a minute ago about a long breath that sustains itself. If you find anything like that in any poem then the impulse which drove the poem at the start is still alive in the poem printed on the page. So that the length of that poem is not the length (endless) of the work but the length of the impulse: exhausted – and achieved – in a breath.

I used to run into students who thought impulse meant idea: you got an idea and somehow you made a poem of it. A poem made out of an idea could run on forever. No single breath there. Impulse as one finds it in this art – maybe in all art – is a glimpse. Of a relationship – a possible relationship – Baudelaire's *Analogie Universelle*. The impulse, the urge, the emotion, begins in that cloudy glimpse and the whole labor of art is to create the form which will contain the relationship – turn glimpse into image. But in such a way that the poem – if you are lucky – if there *is* a poem at the end – will carry *not only* the image but the impulse which produced it – that single breath – its own.

INTERVIEWER

If I understand it, then really it's all in the end of *Reason for Music* – "meaning the movement of the sea." Can you say that in any other way? Can you translate?

MACLEISH

Why do we labor at the poem?
Out of the turbulence of the sea,
Flower by brittle flower, rises
The coral reef that calms the water

Generations of the dying
Fix the sea's dissolving salts
In stone, still trees, their branches immovable,
Meaning,
the movement of the sea.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Translate? Well, I am not one of those who believe that poems can't be translated: it would be an impoverished world if they couldn't. But not, I think, *out* of their images. Suppose you say that poets, like those tiny coral insects, (generations of the dying) fix the sea's dissolving salts in stone, still trees, their branches immovable, which mean – what? The movement of the sea. What have you gained? It's obvious what you have lost – the rhythms which suspend the words in a relationship of their own without which the world of the poem – of any poem – collapses. (A fact of art which one of my admired contemporaries, Bill Williams, tried to forget, misleading a whole generation of the dying as a result). But still what *have* you gained? Why do we labor at the poem? To hold the evanescent *still* in its evanescence. I think the poem says it better – but perhaps I should not attempt to judge.

INTERVIEWER

There's a struggle going on in the stillness, though. I'm thinking about "The Captivity of a Fly"... "My heart against the hard-rib bone beat like a fly." What is the theme exactly? – "a prisoner of the open wall"? It comes back in Job, too, as though it were a "personal remark" in some way. "It had gone free, my heart, it might have gone free, but the shining world so shone."

MACLEISH

The image, of course, is the commonest of all images – the fly against the window-pane that "flings itself in flightless flight." "So it loves light." And the refraction of the image is as obvious. We are all "prisoners of the open wall." What else is "the burden of the mystery" which so weighed on John Keats? Easy enough to turn away from the glass and go free – but not if you're a fly. Easy enough to put off the burden of the mystery – but not if you're human. You spoke of Job. Of course. Easy enough for Job to get down from his dung heap and walk off – if he could

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stop being Job, the man with a passion for justice and therefore the need to confront God. Job is the opposite of the existentialist as he is the opposite of the "good Catholic." His world *has* to mean, because God made it. It is because he loves God that he is certain there are meanings — not the other way around. What satisfies Sartre won't satisfy Job. Nor what satisfies Job's friends. He sees the light and so is prisoner of the glass.

INTERVIEWER

Are you ever completely satisfied with a finished work?

MACLEISH

Not at first. Not while the thing is still malleable. It's like the homicide experts in the movies who judge by the stiffening of the corpse: you can tell — God knows how — when a poem has settled into itself. After that you touch it at your peril: the whole thing may disintegrate if you change a word. It's for that reason I formed the habit long ago of putting new poems into a desk drawer and letting them lie there to ripen (or the opposite) like apples. I suppose everyone else does the same thing. I learned early and by sad experience never to publish a green poem. Who in Hell wrote *that*? Instead I pull them out after a few weeks or months and say, Well . . . possibly . . . and start all over. Or consign the whole thing to the wood fire and hope the seed, whatever it was, will sow itself again. I doubt if it does. It's sick of me by that time.

INTERVIEWER

Could we talk for a minute about Reputation? Can a good writer make his way without cultivating his own reputation? Interviews, luncheons, appearance, back-scratching, all that crap. A lot of people still feel there is an Establishment to be cracked or supplanted before they can start to breathe.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MACLEISH

That word, "Establishment," has a lot to answer for. If it is intended to refer to anything more than the distinction between the old men *now* established and the young men who *want* to be – if, that is to say, it is intended to imply a kind of conspiracy by a few established characters to suppress *les autres* – it is a fraud – or, worse, a kind of escape mechanism . . . an excuse. The real question is the one you put first: how to "arrive" in the world (if it is one) of the arts in our time – a world on which all those monsters you name – television and luncheons and appearances and the rest – batten and feed. Do you have to "arrive"? Not really, but it's convenient if you want to eat regularly. But suppose you do want to eat regularly, do you have to submit to all that nonsense? – because most of it, though there are some intelligent interviewers, *is* nonsense. I don't think so. The fact is that nothing matters ultimately in any art but the *work* of art – *the* poem, *the* fiction. *That* comes first and it is *that* which remains at the last. Cal Lowell began with a poem. So did Dick Wilbur. Frost began with a book of poems. To go at it the other way around is to invite disaster: straw without bricks. Believe in the work. Believe in your own work. No poem was ever suppressed – if it *was* a poem. Belayed, yes. Muffled. Ignored for a generation or a century. But not suppressed.

INTERVIEWER

You wrestled once with the problem of reputation in the arts – in "Poetical Remains." You talked about leaving behind an "anthological rubble," "mind mingled with mind," "odd and even coupled." What is the state of feeling behind the words?

MACLEISH

I suppose you start out (I can only suppose, because it must be a very private experience for each man) with that lust for fame which Keats confessed and which, I guess, we

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

should all confess – all of us who practice an art, certainly. That lust for fame is a lust for personal fame. You want to be distinguished from the others who are remembered – if anybody indeed is going to be remembered. And then, as time goes by and you begin to get a little hindsight, you look back. What really does happen to poets? Most of them leave a few fragments which go into the rubble heap where the next generation can feed on them. They don't intend to but they do. Well, eventually, thinking about all this, you get to the point where you realize that personal fame is not at all what you're concerned with really – that old Robert was right when he said he hoped to leave half a dozen poems which would be hard to get rid of. Wonderful way of saying it. You begin to see that what is really going to happen is not that half a dozen but two, three, four poems, or maybe lines of poems, or fragments – some things may get shelved, shored up, or left behind. But left behind not alone but in a conjunction. So that you begin to think of yourself in terms of the others who were with you in this place – your contemporaries. "Oh living men, Remember me, Receive me among you." And you realize that's how you are really going to end up. You're going to be part of that, of them. And finally you begin to think, that's the way it ought to be. You ought to make the world fruitful that way. Rot! Leaving those fragments – those few poems that will be hard to get rid of.

Obviously, these are very subjective emotions. But I think, even so, even if they are subjective, one can make some generalizations about them. How to go about it? Let me try this way. I think, as you move along . . . now this may simply be a result of the blessed accident that befell me when I found myself, far too old, teaching at Harvard. I began to understand then, by teaching a course in which I tried to find out for myself, what poetry is, what it *really* is. I began to understand that it is a part of a process which extends beyond poetry but which is most apparent *in* poetry, of trying to *see* human experience, trying to *see*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"the world." "The world" being what a man feels *about* the world. Now if you realize this – what the purpose of your art is – you come to see that you are laboring at your art not only to make works of art but to make sense of your life – those dark and bewildering moments of experience. And to make sense of it not only for yourself. In other words those poems are not works to be published for the glory of A. MacLeish – so that A. MacLeish may be spoken of. Not at all. They are steps in an attempt to stop time in terms of time so that it may be *seen*. To stop time, but to stop it in its own terms. Let men see it. Make it *visible* to men. Therefore, whatever you leave behind you exists in terms of those others who have read it, who were aware of it, who were moved by it. And the consequence is that you *do* have a totally different attitude toward fame. It isn't that you want to be admired any the less. Of course you want to be admired. Any poet wants to be admired – to be a great poet. But who is a great poet? Maybe a handful in the world's history. So that's irrelevant. What's really going to come out of your work is something else. If you have succeeded at all you have become part – however small a part – of the consciousness of your time. Which is enough. No?

–BENJAMIN DEMOTT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

John McKernan

The Season

Oh it's Christmas time in Omaha Nebraska!
"Almost alive" red lips say through the panes.

His blue eye, his brown eye, his chipped ear,
Wearing a gray wig, missing two fingers,

My father is easily the handsomest mannequin
In the display window at Brandeis and Sons.

At me? His son: John J? Unassembled I lie
In a crate near the electric train.

See the workers dressed like priests screw on
My head. Lock on my arms. Twist on my legs.

I am seated in an easy chair. I am wearing
My new schoolboy costume. I hold a new Latin

Book in my hand. A Chicago Bears satchel over
One arm. Yellow pencils in my pocket.

I paste a scowl all over my face.
The "Dumpy Doll" envies my frown.

Father smiles at me. He does not understand
Why the electric train and track he bought for me

Are only a mountain of dark plaster, a flurry
Of dry snow, the thin noise of wheels.

Nor does he understand why the ice skates I wanted
So badly are razor blades across the cold back

Of the duck pond. Nor do I. Fixed
In plaster, I stare. I scowl.

Oh see my hands. Oh see my feet.
Thirteen more days till Christmas.

I stare ahead. I do not blink.
After the new year, they will take us apart.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Robert Phillips

The Empty Man

A cup before coffee, a shell
  after the scrambled egg,
I am a big nothing
  inside. A hole. A hideous
gaping vacuole. X-rayed, I
  reveal a TV set
after the tube is removed.
  Nothing turns me on.

I tried to fill myself
  with Hope. It sprang
eternal, for a while. But
  there is no future in it.
I tried to fill myself
  with History. But the past is
undeveloped, a thin black film.
  Nostalgia is not what it used to be.

I tried to cram myself
  with Literature. I became
a stuffed owl: Dickens and Dickinson,
  Diderot and Sappho, Colette
and Kant, Shakespeare
  and Etcetera.
In the end they proved indigestible.
  In the end, they turned to shit.

I tried to fill myself with You.
  I funneled all your talent,
brown-eyedness, energy,
  optimism and tits. All inside.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I poured you on. But my ass
had a hole in it. You leaked away.
Your beautiful essence drained out
like dirty bath water.

I tried to siphon off my Best
Friend. His liver, his lights,
his action, his camera. I identified.
I stole his talk, walk, wink, stink.
I sucked him through a straw.
I, Dracula, succubus, lived off
him for months. The faster I absorbed,
the slower I spun:

A running-down top,
a drunken dervish whirl,
going everywhere, getting nowhere,
my life staggered to a stop.
It fell on its side like a decapitated
chicken. Help! I'm a keyhole
without a key. Help, I'm an eye
without a hook! Can you satisfy?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Philip Legler

Sheet Monger, Blanket Hoarder

Sheet-monger, blanket-hoarder,
wool gatherer of nightmares,
wrapped in white linen like a corpse,
wrapped in your dreams, a straight-jacket,
I remember that night in Frisco
when we got our new bodies.
It wasn't an operation
performed by a team of specialists;
it wasn't a heart transplant;
nothing was sewn or grafted.
In our new bodies it was a miracle.

And all those years beaten by love,
strangled by love, crazy in the head for love,
you thought you were dying.
Your body, you were sure, was dead
like a person in trance, far away,
but you wore it to remind yourself –
a woman dressed in black.

I, too, was much the same,
at forty-five, pot-bellied,
throwing the dirt in my face,
dirt from the grave,
the undertaker's hand on my shoulder.
I dreamed of the breasts
and thighs of young girls;
I stood before the mirror
as at a wake,
long hair, loud shirt and loud slacks;
at least I would go in style.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Then we got our new bodies.
Your hand touched my arm
and my face, a death mask, was clean;
all the dirt fell away, a truckload.
And the young girls died instead.
Your hand touched my arm
and you stood there in a white dress
like a woman after a bath. And you were beautiful.

Sheet-monger, blanket-hoarder,
small-breasted Annie, my skinny, my love,
the night we got our new bodies
we threw all the covers off.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

William Harrison

The Good Ship Erasmus

This is one of those cruise ships dedicated to helping people. These ships embark every day now from such places as Miami, Liverpool, Naples or Athens, some of them stuffed with psychiatrists trying to help the passengers forget their troubles, others with physical culture experts trying to beat the blubber off a fat clientele, others with religious leaders trying to purge or mystify those who are aboard.

Our ship, *The Erasmus*, has a somewhat less complicated mission: theoretically, at least, it is just a ship which will hold us captive on the high seas until we have all stopped smoking. We sailed from Amsterdam a few days ago, puffing like mad on the dock before the horn sounded, and in a few short weeks we will be around Italy, the warm Mediterannean waters soothing us – one hope being, I assume, that craved minds will turn away from nicotine to romantic lust – until all lungs are healthy again.

My game is smuggling thousands of cigars and cigarettes

©Copyright 1974 by William Harrison

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on board.

By the time we see the French coast I'm largely in control of many of the three hundred lives around me.

It is enough to make me slightly melancholy, philosophic. I stand here at the rail gazing into the calm summer waves, ruminating on things economic, psychological, theological.

The Erasmus has twin stabilizers, a cruising speed of twenty-six knots, lounges, shops, bars, a gymnasium, swimming pools, dining rooms, and an optimistic staff. Perry Cheyenne is the Passenger Host who directs our seminars, offers encouragement to those in withdrawal and despair, arranges parties and games and contests. He wears tennis clothes and a yacht cap, grins, bounces as he goes. Our captain is never seen, just this happy Passenger Host; the captain is far away, up there somewhere on the bridge, steering us onward.

I find in this a metaphor for life.

Shopping for clothes, I buy tennis wear just like Perry's and give serious consideration to a maroon tuxedo. I boarded with four oversized suitcases and a trunk all stuffed with everyone's favorite brands, domestic and foreign, so only had my one business suit.

I do all this because of the character of our age. It grows difficult to find a situation in which one can be clearly immoral, in which one can be sure of his deeds against nature and the soul.

"I'd *give* you the tux, mister, for one lousy cigarette, believe me," sighs Ramona, the salesgirl. She is working her passage on this expensive cruise here in the men's shop.

"I have plenty of cigarettes in my cabin," I disclose, admiring the cut of the jacket.

She eyes me openly, wantonly.

"What price you asking?" she blurts out, incapable of coyness.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"There are many prices," I tell her. "The cost isn't always the same."

There are deeper elements in all this beyond the fact of it being a simple tobacco-curing sea voyage. There is the death of God, the tides of history, and my own somewhat complicated personality. It's very confusing, sorting it out, which accounts for the choppy style of this report. Also, not only do I lose track of the exact philosophic flow, but my attention span, like yours, is short.

On deck, naturally, we passengers exchange personal information.

My father was from Chicago, my mother from Geneva, and I was born in the skiing village of Igls above Innsbruck as an American citizen. Father was an author and consumer of thick books and in his library I spent my asthmatic adolescence, ducking out of boarding schools to sit among his volumes instead. Once, six days into my puberty – I knew you'd want this incidental and inevitable note – I seduced our young Austrian housekeeper. I travelled and studied. Soon I knew many things and some of these which I tell my fellow passengers are:

The earliest cave men lived in caves on the French Riviera very near the beach and sunshine.

The poet Rilke died from being pricked by a rose thorn.

The population of the world now doubles every thirty years.

Scheherazade's erotic *Thousand and One Nights* ends with a prayer.

The only place to get a drink on Sunday morning in Rome is inside the bar at St. Peter's.

Choose one.

Sitting in deck chairs together, Mrs. Murtaugh and I discuss our separate problems. She is already beginning to resist therapy and sits here sucking a dummy cigarette, a little wooden Tinker Toy with a red-painted tip.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"My seminar group is meeting right now," she wails, "but I just can't go today. I don't like my hypnotist. If you don't respond to your hypnotist, he just can't put you under so you might as well quit."

"This is a degrading sort of troublemaking," I complain, "coming on board a sailing vessel peddling smokes. In another age I might've been a Satanic figure, my life a tragedy of corruption. Now look at me: I go around letting those of weak wills sniff the nicotine on my fingers and smell my brown breath."

"Worse yet," she continues, "I can't make love without a ciggie. I *have* to catch a smoke before and afterwards or I just can't go for sex. I told my group leader that and I told that insensitive hypnotist, too!"

"The world is just too libertine," I muse aloud. "In another age I could've been Iago, but not now. I take the whole reckless course of human history back to its cosmic roots, too, and the lost sense of the divine."

"So here I sit in a dowdy deck chair! A deck chair! I'm only fifty-six years old! I'm a warm-blooded woman, let me *tell* you, and a cruise is a cruise!"

"One could blame God, of course, for making man finite. A really benevolent God would've made man his equal – been a sport about the creation, I mean – but no, man is a weak hybrid, lower than the angels. And so it was certain to come to this: a time when the moral distinctions completely blur. Man adrift in a sensual sea. Perfecting the rhythms of pandemonium."

"What'd you say you peddled? Did you say ciggies?"

"I once wanted to be really evil. For instance, I thought of things like murder. But the world has too strong a death drive on its own – nothing very original can even be done with murder! And sex criminals can't get a headline because their perversions are so everyday. I spent my teen years practicing lots of nasty habits, I mean, but now there're movies and songs celebrating these things! I'm trying to get across the point, Mrs. Murtaugh, that all my

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

life I've dreamt about doing people in, but fortune has only left me a few petty hustles."

"Did you say you actually have ciggies?"

Clearly, Mrs. Murtaugh isn't quite on my frequency when I describe the final indifference of the Greeks to their gods, Dante's rejection of religion in favor of secular politics, the Renaissance, growth of the factories, Einstein. Her eyes fasten on me as I talk and gaze out toward the Spanish coast, but she hears little.

At last, yes, I say, yes, Mrs. Murtaugh, I'll take your Bank Americard.

Everyone scampers ashore at Bilbao, the Bay of Biscay glistening in the hot sun around *The Erasmus* as I wait on board. By this time those who have resisted me run boldly toward the nearest cafes where they pay outlandish prices for packs of Pipers, Celtas, and other mediocre Spanish cigarettes.

Perry stands astride the gangplank, meanwhile, with his good-natured shakedown crew. When passengers return with bulges under their sport shirts and Bermuda shorts, the crew searches them and laughingly tosses their goodies into the bay. I look on with approval. A mere $20 bribe passes my contraband aboard without the slightest inspection and I disdain the lack of foresight and these clumsy attempts on the lone returning gangplank.

Perry gives the fallen few peptalks, making a fist as he lectures like a determined prep school coach. Both his teeth and shoes glisten white.

Later, two of my customers are caught smoking in one of the cramped hatches and Perry and his crew suffer doubts over their effectiveness at the gangplank. Perry shames the offenders in front of a Combined Seminar Meeting in the auditorium, shredding their cigarettes in public. One of them, a civic leader from Palatine, Illinois, nearly weeps. I respect Perry's zeal.

After this spectacle there is a speech by the ship's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

doctor, who says things like, "Please, *folks*, don't poison your body!" Then we have a demonstration by the hypnotist whose victim is a long-legged girl named Judy. When she swoons many in the audience are visibly moved.

There aren't enough chairs and the room is crowded, so I move among the throng like a savage force. Here and there I catch a knowing eye.

The famous Danish porno cruise ship, *Flicka*, passes us after we turn back into the Atlantic. Dedicated to orgy-minded travellers, it flies a single red flag and moves by us slowly on the hint of music.

Erasmus lists to port as we pass, my envious fellow passengers out there clutching the rail for a good look. Soon it is beyond our wake.

Pensive, my philosophical mood hanging on, yet talkative, I consent to my assigned session with one of the psychiatrists-in-residence, a Doctor Gonatt. He is impressed by my Austrian background and remarks that he once tried to read one of father's novels.

Gonatt strives to comprehend me and suggests an arrested moral growth brought on by culture fatigue and I have some difficulty explaining, no, I am actually an advanced and complex monster and that dedication to evil usually has curious and subtle side benefits for mankind anyway. We all know the evil that good men invariably do, I point out, but we must also consider the ironic value of the deviate. The sheep is not truly itself without the wolf, I explain, fetching an illusion which escapes him.

We talk and talk.

Gonatt has a drinking problem, I learn, and is trying to recover financially so he can re-open his clinic near San Diego. He used to smoke a pipe, he recalls: a big, curve-stemmed Meerschaum with a bowl like a factory chimney.

As he prattles his hands begin to tremble, so I can do no other than offer a menthol filter which, naturally, he

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

accepts.

Here I sit in the Desiderius bar, the ship's plushest lounge, with the keys to my closet and locker safely rattling in my pocket, content that the stewards who clean my cabin will never find anything, but one of my best customers comes over and informs me that Perry Cheyenne is onto somebody. At first this makes me paranoid and I consider returning to B Deck and checking my hoard, but I calm myself.

"Watch your step, pal," my customer advises. His name is Mr. Branch, a successful food expert from Brussels, and he has never indulged in such side-of-the-mouth dramatics before.

I offer the next barstool. "Steady now. Tell me what's happening," I say evenly, trying to reassure him.

He insists there are high-level meetings involving Perry, the captain, the ship's doctor, and certain spies. Perry is furious. There have been butts in the public rooms and tell-tale holes burnt in a few of the bed linens.

I buy poor Branch a drink and promise an extra pack for his loyalty, but inside me I feel a stirring: a tingle of excitement, a new pulse. Deep down, perhaps, I crave confrontation.

I wear my maroon tuxedo to the evening dance. I know that Perry watches me as I make the rounds talking and laughing. The game seems to be on.

Later, back in my cabin I can't sleep. In spite of my tendency toward asthma, I smoke one of my cigarettes and speculate on my troublesome nature. The saintly good man, by definition, is humble to the point that he can move through the world anonymously; the man of evil, to the contrary, must have his foul deeds known and take pride in them. Ruminating, I decide that a showdown with Perry might be inevitable, yet it isn't what I want. Specifically, I need an intellectual adversary — not just some giddy zealot.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The captain: one wonders what or who he is.

The sleepless night continues and I finally dress and make my way to the ship's library. Perusing the magazines, I find nothing of interest and eventually settle back with a strange little volume by the Dutch philosopher Aart van der Leeuw who remarks that, "The mystery of life is not a problem to be solved but a reality to be experienced."

This also fails to move me and I return to my berth.

Beyond Gibralter the nights turn suddenly hot and life on *The Erasmus* grows intense. Pairing off seems to occupy everybody's time and the ship begins to rock with new diversions. Girls in bikinis, laughing, spring from one deck to another; the men are brown and strangely healthy in spite of my booming business, their coughs lessened, and all the meals and games are attacked with gusto.

At the pool there is hardly room for me to splash around. One of the major lounges has been converted into a lively casino, games in every corner, and the Desiderius is packed with roaring drunks.

Perry seems content that such revelry excludes smoking, but a few of us detect his almost imperceptible discontent. Perhaps the slant of his yacht cap. A bounce slightly lessened.

However, before the floor show and dance he leads us in our nightly deep-breathing exercises, slapping his hands loudly and giving off his familiar, "Hey, everybody, now!"

Afterward the usual crowd of female enthusiasts are around him, gushing, admiring his stamina.

Out on deck I stroll along moodily until my shopgirl, Ramona, comes and takes my arm. I speak of the ancient Roman mentality which resulted in Nero, the acute aesthetic awareness of certain high Nazis, the occasional meditations of De Sade which, in my opinion, soared beyond his more frequent banality.

Meanwhile, Ramona nuzzles my neck.

From high on the bridge comes a green glow from the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

captain's window.

The sea is moderate.

Mrs. Murtaugh and Dr. Gonatt pass by holding hands.

We anchor offshore at Cannes. Everyone pours down into the awaiting launches to go ashore and visit the film festival, shop, strut around the promenade, and of course steal a few drags.

Near the beach just outside the Hotel Martinez photographers encircle a movie starlet who tries to contain herself in a peek-a-boo swimsuit. As I linger near this confusion, my thoughts momentarily meandering onto the nature of publicity and its role in the world's present corruption, I find Perry beside me. He makes a tsk tsk at the proceedings, appears friendly, but I take this seemingly accidental appearance as ominous.

"How's everything going?" I query him.

"Not awfully well," he admits. "We should have many more passengers cured by now than we do."

"Oh? How many do we have?"

"At last night's staff meeting we estimated fifteen percent — far below normal. I've been ramrod on cruises where we got fifty percent."

Now I make a tsk tsk.

We exchange a few minutes of small talk there on the promenade until the starlet back-peddles into the hotel with her fixed smile. Then Perry excuses himself and ambles away and, yes, I see that his bouncy walk has modified.

No doubt of it: he's worried and this banter was an ill omen. Why me?

In the cover of darkness, later, I transfer my diminished stock into the locked cabinets beneath the hand-painted ties and initialed handkerchiefs in Ramona's men's shop. For a mere pack a day, she is now my dealer and accomplice and it's none too soon.

Sicily is admired for its lovely cliffs above the sea, its

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hearty peasants, its wines, but I admire it for its history of violence.

As we pass by on a sunny noon, I cease whittling my Christian name into the rail and salute with my pocket knife.

The captain asks to see me.

When Perry presents himself at my cabin door with this message I feel a myriad excitement. Do they have evidence, I wonder, or are they bluffing? Will the captain be a worthy adversary? Even if I'm caught dead to rights with Ramona as the unshakable witness for the prosecution, what could they possibly do to me?

I dress slowly in my all-whites. Take, I caution myself, every possible psychological advantage. My thoughts spin around like dervishes.

They're just no match for me, neither Perry nor his eager scouts. Also, I've committed no crime and at most they can only put me ashore at one of these lovely southern ports. And what could they possibly say? I'm an articulate devil, if I say so myself, and intellectually stockpiled to parry any of their pious thrusts, to argue far above their simple heads that good nowadays is a form of evil and vice-versa.

Perry waits smugly for me in the corridor and escorts me up to Deck AA. Every step I'm practicing my suave argument.

Society has gone mad, so that as the man of reason tries to apply his reason to madness he is being absurd. He thinks he is doing good as he uses his wit against the world's puzzle, I'll tell them, but he's actually trying to ponder the unfathomable. Not only is he a useless dolt, but he's even harmful because he misleads others. The true monster, however: ah, he goes his wicked way, attracts constant notoriety, and possibly teaches mankind a hard lesson in morality -- in spite of himself.

We reach Deck AA. A long walk to the bridge.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

My lips move as I practice my lines.

Perry, straight of back, knocks with authority on the door, opens it, and ushers me inside. Before us is the helm of the ship – a big wheel just like in swashbuckling movies – and the luminous green eye of a large compass. The walls are dingy white and beyond the wide, salt-sprayed windows the bow breaks the waves.

The captain isn't present.

Nervously, Perry announces that we should wait.

As we stand in silence shifting from one foot to another together, I take a good look at the bridge. It seems vaguely familiar – although I've never been in such a place before – yet also personalized and different. The captain, wherever he is, is clearly a man of some reading habits; paperbacks, a few antiquated leather-bound volumes, magazines and newspapers are stuffed into the shelves behind the desk. There is also a narrow, uncomfortable looking bed.

When I inquire, Perry admits that sometimes the old man sleeps up here and doesn't bother to go below.

A variety of clothing is strewn around. Not a very neat man, I surmise, and I count two frayed naval topcoats, a rain slicker, a few discolored turtlenecks, underwear, socks, and, curiously enough, a shawl.

Perry shows his discomfort as I observe all this.

Soon there is a whistle, a cough, and another whistle from an instrument near the compass and Perry dashes over there. A man from the boiler room – I can hear, in the midst of his profanities, talk of gaskets and seals – says that the captain is down there, grease up to the elbows, yes, dammit, and, no, there's nothing seriously wrong, but the captain can't make it. I'm to come back later, the voice says, because the captain has the opinion that the appointment isn't urgent.

This frustrates us. Primed for accusation and argument, I start to protest. Perry, his smugness gone, sputters and asks if he shouldn't remain and steer the ship, but the voice answers hell no, naturally not, the ship's locked on

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

course.

Embarrassed, Perry says he must attend his many duties and offers that I'll have to find my own way to see the captain.

"No problem," I say. "Get on with your business."

He is visibly shaken. His yacht cap sags as he tells me that Deck AA is often closed to passengers, that I should probably seek written permission, that, er, perhaps another crew member could escort me.

"You heard the man in the boiler room," I answer. "It's nothing big. I'll stop around again when it's convenient for everyone."

The cigarettes are untouched, safely there underneath the counter in Ramona's shop. She doesn't understand why I kiss her cheek.

Later, alone, I probe the aspects of my new advantage. Either they were bluffing or they have the barest suspicion. At any rate, now I'm free to make this a real intellectual rendezvous, a true confrontation; I'll bring down the weight of Nietzsche, Machiavelli, and all the obscure Mongol thinkers on that innocent captain's arguments.

The best time to catch the old sea dog, I reason, will be in the evening, so I wait until the day's seminars finish and the dances begin before making my way to the bridge once more.

Empty. The ship is still automatically fixed on course. I peer through the window at the green glow of the compass. Eerie.

Feeling odd, I go back to my cabin, slip into my maroon tuxedo, and take refuge in the music of the Desiderius.

The next day I make frequent trips up to Deck AA, but the old boy is never there.

On one of my visits I try the door and find it open. Inside, I casually grip the wheel. On the nearby desk are charts — an outline of the Italian coast around Amalfi. I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

exchange stares with the omnipotent compass, gaze off at the horizon where, dimly, far away to port, lies the coast.

The wheel, yes, is fixed on course. Comforting.

Days pass.

Perry is deep in a frenzy of work now, seemingly having forgotten me. The seminars are booming therapy sessions with the members shouting obscenities at each other, vomiting up their private lives, accusing and demanding, and Perry is there, I learn, orchestrating all of it. When I see him on deck his clothes are soiled and wrinkled, his hair is long and hanging from his yacht cap, his eyes weary.

I hear of a bloody fight in the casino lounge.

Beside the nearly empty swimming pool — one fat man lolling on his back — I take a glum stroll. After a while I sit down on the tile, deciding not to take my swim.

Where, I wonder, is our elusive captain?

Tonight after checking the bridge again I visit the boiler room, but the engines are purring unattended. There seems to be no one above or below, just Perry and his bedraggled crew working amidships with an increasingly restless cargo of passengers. The voyage is too long for us, I tell myself.

Toward morning I wander back toward the vacant bridge. Prying, I rummage around in the captain's desk — paperclips, parchments, a service medal, the passenger list, a quill pen — and pull a few books off the shelves. A few first editions nobody would ever read. Magazines: popular European gossip items, nudist camp publications, occult periodicals, journals on sports, wildlife, travel, cuisine.

And so who is my eclectic adversary? An ordinary escapist, the Flying Dutchman, some alienated intelligence, just a shy and simple pilot?

Before departing again, I trace my finger over the charts. Not too difficult reading charts, I conclude; the deeps and shallows are clearly marked.

The scent of the Greek isles rides the wind.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At times, now, I forget exactly where we're putting into final port.

My mind is on last diversions – parties, another amateur night, my shopgirl who insists she has fallen in love with me, testimonials in the Desiderius for those few who have actually kicked the habit – and I am still playing hide-and-seek with the old sea wolf upstairs.

Disheveled, a mere wisp of a smile left on his face, Perry goes around patting everyone on the back and making the best of a cruise low on converts.

A few brave passengers grin sheepishly, shrug, and light up the last of my dwindling supply in public.

I speak to Ramona of noble Sparta, the breakdown of physical integrity followed by general decline.

Here I am on the bridge again.

Once more I take a grip on the helm and peer out over the bow, but this time I'm surprised to find that we're not on a fixed course and that I'm alone at the wheel. The locking device: yes, here it is. I see, it must be part of an automatic system in conjunction with the compass. Sure.

The compass illuminates the darkened room in a cozy green glow, my charts curl, and I slip into one of the turtlenecks.

Long days and nights.

Far out now, no sign of land.

We have a westerly course, a good barometer.

The new Passenger Host pops in, salutes, makes happy small talk, and reports that the new passengers are settled into seminars. His name is, I think, Jerry, and he asks if I'll have my meals up here today and I say, yes, please. I watch him bounce away in his whites, calling and waving to someone below as he descends.

Later he returns with a crisp new passenger list, the mimeograph ink hardly dry. I read over it wondering if any of these passengers might be capable of philosophical discussion.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

My Ramona is gone.

We made a stop somewhere, exchanged everyone, took on supplies, set forth again, and the most curious thing about this is that my new quarters are filled with cigarettes.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Christopher Wilmarth

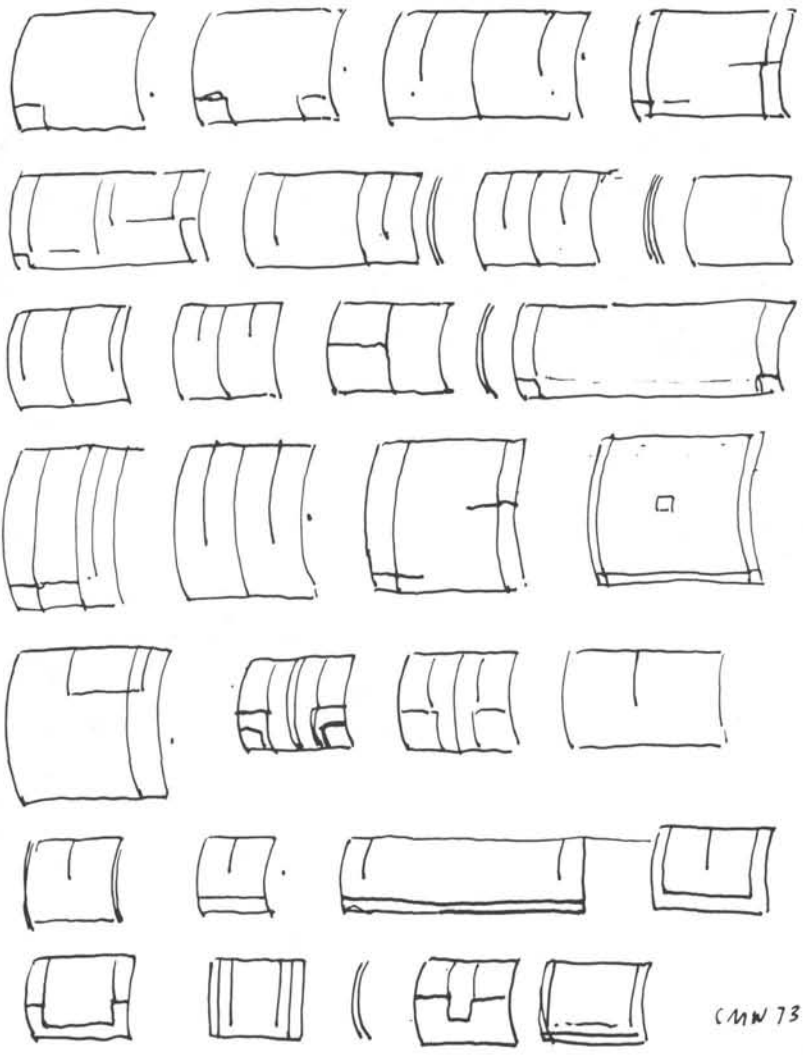
Portfolio

Chris Wilmarth is a young sculptor living and working south of Houston Street in Manhattan. His medium is the product of the post-industrial age. To make his pieces, he employs heavy machinery and materials that are not traditionally those of sculpture. He has given his students at Cooper Union such unconventional sculptural projects as watching the construction crews at work on Wall Street and making art from the wreckage and left-overs of the Lower East Side.

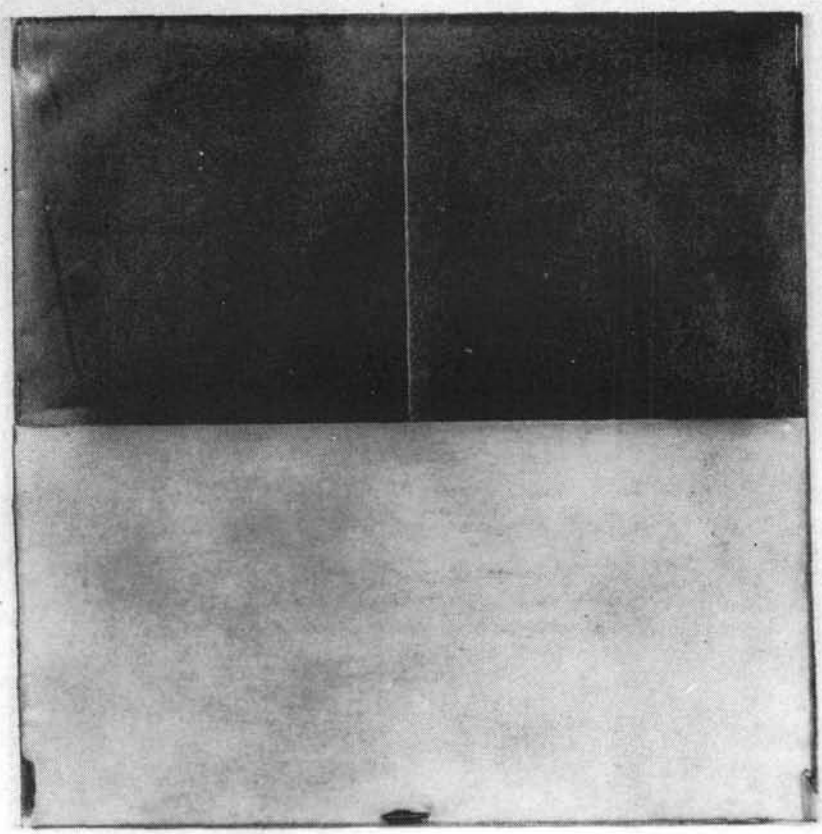
His work transmutes the properties of glass, steel and wire from their customary mundane states into vehicles of tranquility and order. Each final sculpture and wall piece is the result of a progression of ideas worked out intuitively in line drawings and watercolor studies whose appearances are deceptively plain or simple. A curved line becomes a shape; a translucent wash of paint becomes shorthand for light passing through a semi-transparent surface. This concern for the possibilities of light (mystical as well as physical) results in sculptures which possess a kinship to Rothko's dark, luminous pictures and to the emotional qualities of light in Hopper's paintings, but whose existence remains physical, three dimensional and haptic. When the etched glass is attached to the inflected steel plate with wire that is strong enough to support tons of pressure, the steel becomes more shadow than weight, the glass takes on color and nuance from the air which fills the spaces between the two substances. The idea, the vision of the piece, transcends the extreme heaviness of the materials. The sculptures, watercolors and drawings experiment in many formal directions within precisely defined boundaries set by measurements and materials. Wilmarth's work is apolitical and an inheritor of the tradition of the American Sublime. It is reflective, resistant to any rapid analysis; evoking pre-verbal emotions, especially wonder. (AA)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

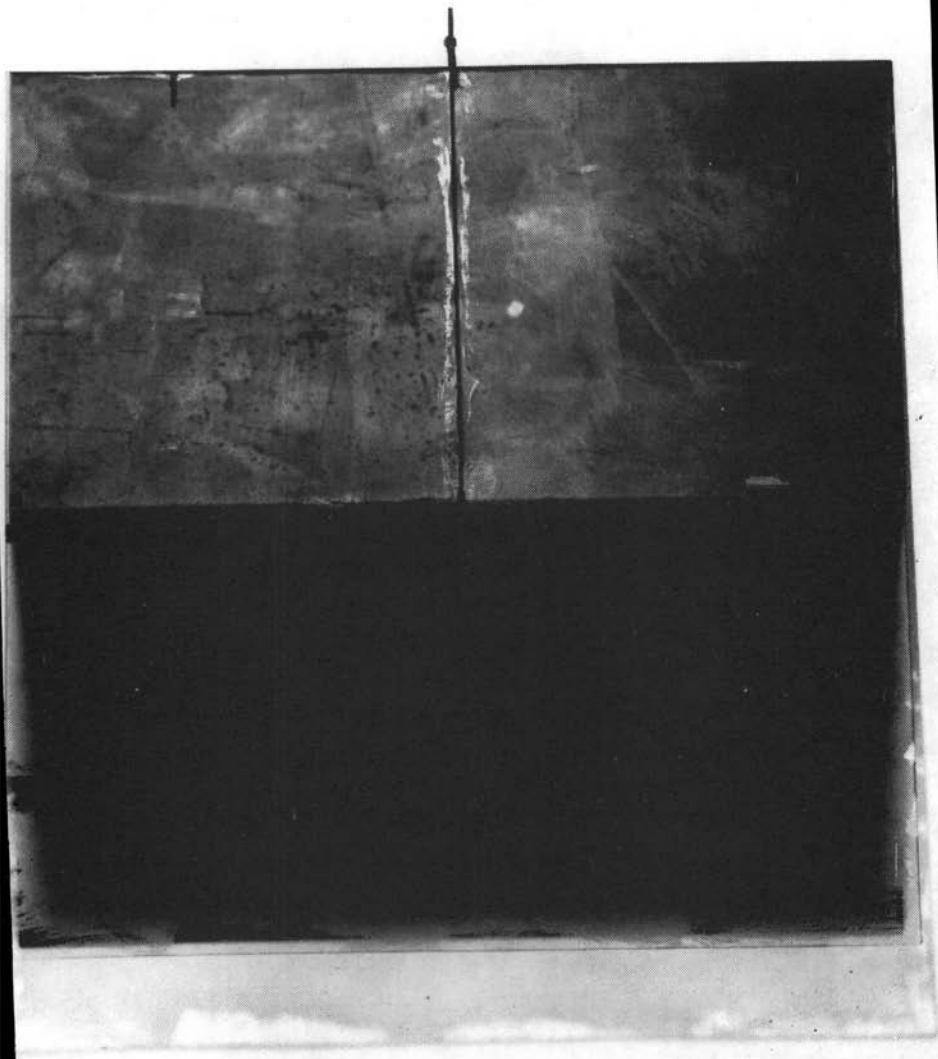
This page depicts the artist's initial line drawings. The following pages show his watercolor interpretation on the left hand and final sculpture on right. The last page is also a finished sculpture.



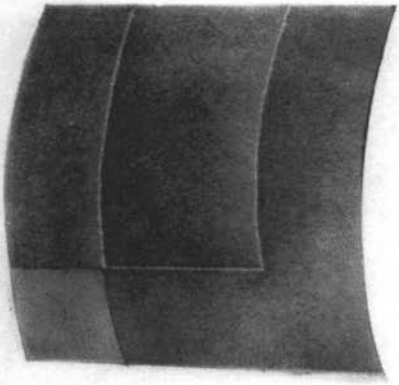
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



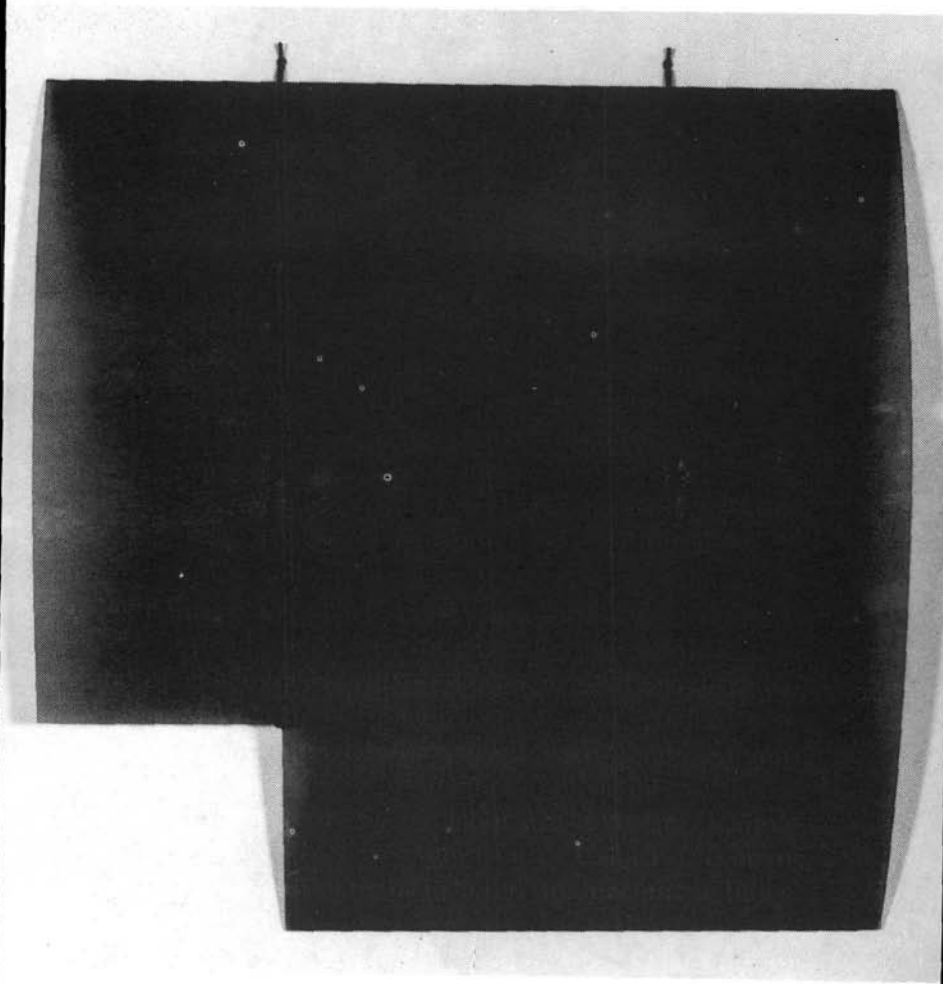
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



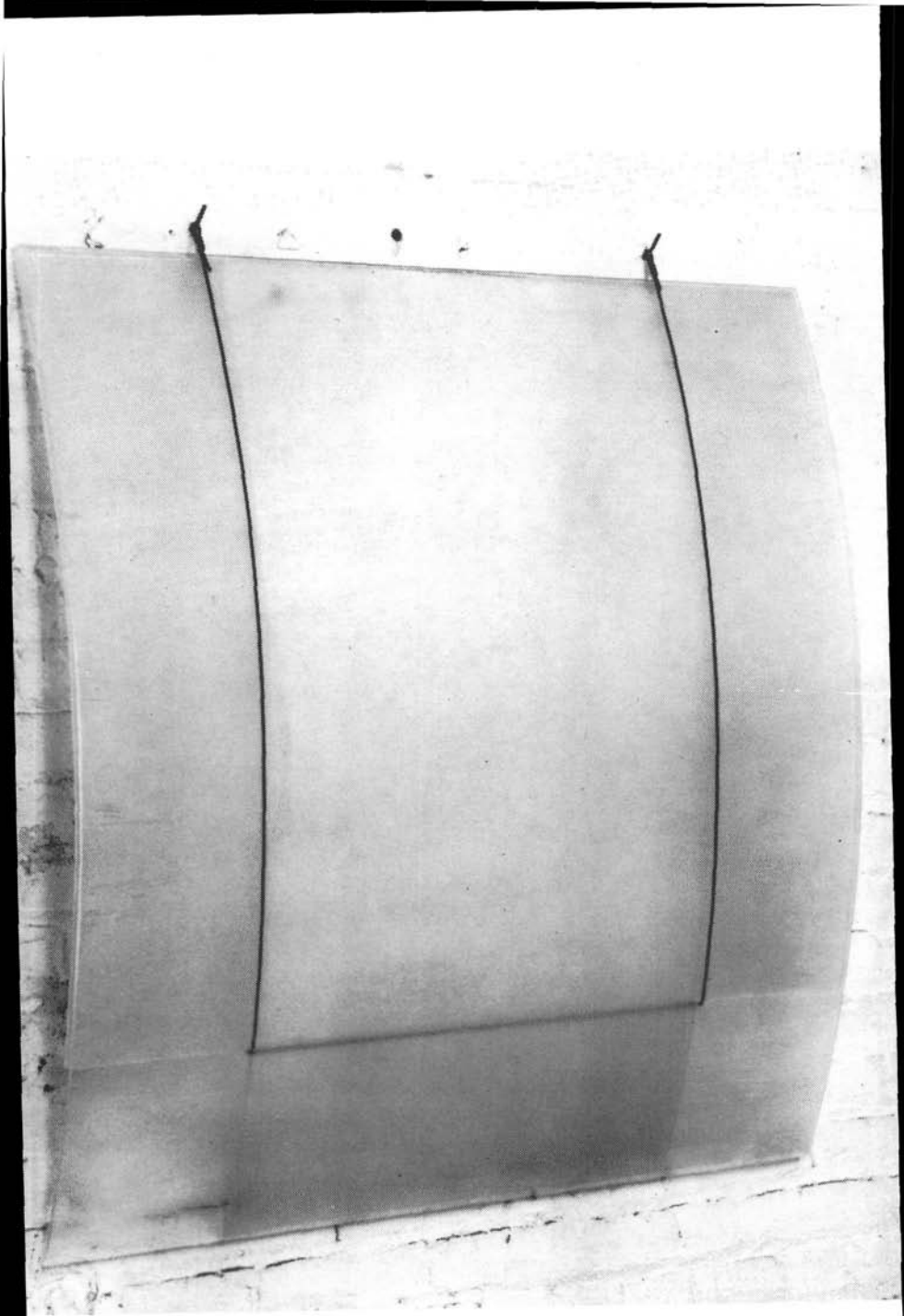
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stephen Frank

My Nose

The air retreats each moment.
I feel it laugh
and march away from
the space around my nose.

All I am stops here.
My nose is my farthest outpost.
Here wilderness space begins.

I surround the only heart
I will ever encompass.
Heart of the table
Heart of the air
Heart of my wife
elude me.

In my mind
a disorderly army
finds it hard to breathe.
So I have raised
a white flag.
Naturally, it is fluttering
from my nose.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stephen Frank

Passing

Fat Russian novels are sinking
like grandmothers into the snow,
and a troika is whisking through my sleevs
as if time were muffled
in the folds of my overcoat.

The harness creaks.
The horses snort
small jets of breath into my stormy coat,
and somehow I am flying backwards
over the salted landscape.
Suddenly my grandmother passes by –
on a lounge chair, in bathing suit and sunglasses.
She is flying forward, to Florida.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stephen Frank

My Nose

The air retreats each moment.
I feel it laugh
and march away from
the space around my nose.

All I am stops here.
My nose is my farthest outpost.
Here wilderness space begins.

I surround the only heart
I will ever encompass.
Heart of the table
Heart of the air
Heart of my wife
elude me.

In my mind
a disorderly army
finds it hard to breathe.
So I have raised
a white flag.
Naturally, it is fluttering
from my nose.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stephen Frank

Passing

Fat Russian novels are sinking
like grandmothers into the snow,
and a troika is whisking through my sleevs
as if time were muffled
in the folds of my overcoat.

The harness creaks.
The horses snort
small jets of breath into my stormy coat,
and somehow I am flying backwards
over the salted landscape.
Suddenly my grandmother passes by —
on a lounge chair, in bathing suit and sunglasses.
She is flying forward, to Florida.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gerald Stern

Straus Park

If you know about the Babylonian Jews
coming back to their stone houses in Jerusalem,
and if you know how Ben Franklin fretted
after the fire on Arch Street,
and if you yourself go crazy when you walk through the old shell
on Stout's Valley Road,
then you must know how I felt when I saw Stanley's Cafeteria
boarded up and the sale sign out;
and if you yourself mourned when you saw the back wall settling
and the first floor gone and the stairway gutted
then you must know how I felt when I saw the iron fence
and the scaffold and the plastic sheets in the windows.
– Don't go to California yet!
Come with me to Stanley's and spend your life
weeping in the small park on 106th Street.
Stay with me all night! I will give you
breast of lamb with the fat dripping over the edges;
I will give you the prophet of Baal
making the blood come.
Don't go to California with its big rotting sun
and its oleanders;
I will give you Sappho
preparing herself for the wind;
I will give you Mussolini
Sleeping in his chair;
I will give you Voltaire
walking in the snow.
– This is the dark green bench
where I read Yeats,
and that is the fountain where the Deuteronomist sat

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with his eyes on the nymph's stomach.
I want you to come here one more time
before you go to California;
I want you to see the Hotel Regent again
and the Edison Theater
and the Cleopatra Fruit Market.
Take the iron fence with you
when you go into the desert.
Take Voltaire and the Deuteronomist
and the luscious nymph.
Do not burn again for nothing.
Do not cry out again in clumsiness and shame.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gerald Stern

At Bickford's

You should understand that I use my body now for everything
whereas formerly I kept it away from higher regions.
My clothes are in a stack over against the orange pine cupboard
and my hair is lying in little piles on the kitchen floor.
I am finally ready for the happiness I spent my youth arguing
and fighting against.
Twenty years ago -- walking on Broadway –
I crashed into Shaddai and his eagles.
My great specialty was darkness then
and radiant sexual energy.
Now when light drips on me I walk around without tears.
– Before long I am going to live again on four dollars a day
in the little blocks between 96th and 116th.
I am going to follow the thin line of obedience
between George's Restaurant and Salter's Books.
There is just so much feeling left in me for my old ghost
and I will spend it all in one last outburst of charity.
I will give him money; I will listen to his poems;
I will pity his marriage.
– After that I will drift off again to Bickford's
and spend my life in the cracked cups and the corn muffins.
I will lose half my hatred
at the round tables
and let any beliefs that want to overtake me.
On lucky afternoons the sun will break through the thick glass
and rest like a hand on my forehead.
I will sit and read in my chair;
I will wave from my window.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gerald Stern

Let Me Please Look Into My Window

Let me please look into my window on 103rd Street
one more time –
without crying, without tearing the satin, without touching
the white face, without straightening the tie or crumpling
the flower.

Let me walk up Broadway past Zaks, past the Melody
Fruit Store,
past Stein's Eyes, past the New Moon Inn, past the Olympia.

Let me leave quietly by gate 29
and fall asleep as we pull away from the ramp
into the tunnel.

Let me wake up happy, let me know where I am,
let me lie still,
as we turn left, as we cross the water, as we leave the light.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gerald Stern

The Power of Maples

If you want to live in the country you have to understand the
power of maples.
You have to see them sink their teeth into the roots of the old
locusts.
You have to see them force the sycamores to gasp for air.
You have to see them move their thick hairs into the cellar.
And when you cut your great green shad pole
you have to be ready for it to start sprouting in your hands;
you have to stick it in the ground like a piece of willow;
you have to plant your table under its leaves and begin eating.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jon Enroth

Many More Have Died Here

I drove all night, and followed the morning sun
to craggy coastal inlets as green as if
the autumn wind that blows so very cold,
into, then out of, Atlantic low pressure holes,
were actually the breath of Maine's new spring.

My breakfast, Tang and Instant Quaker Oats,
I devoured in a rest stop somewhat off the road,
where a girl in a bikini braved the morning cold
and strode with towel in hand, down rocky steps,
to the beach, where tidal pools held tiny crabs
in salty fingers: silent isolation.

I watched her walk along the dark grey sand –
she laid her towel beside a weathered log
and reclined to taste the pleasure of the sun.

She's one remembrance that I have of Maine.
Another is thousands and thousands of roadside
graves.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jon Enroth

Panhandle Postcard

Amarillo,
Athens of a moonlike plain,
burst into the Texas sky like an arcade,
reflecting the sand of the Milky Way
drawn out in a stretch of neverland.

Amarillo is Texas to me.
Houston is an oil derrick dwarfing James Dean.
Dallas is John Kennedy dying.

Amarillo is a thunderstorm in the western sky,
a five-dollar motel that looked like heaven,
my mind fighting off residue from an Ozark morning so cold
that we bypassed food and crossed a hatchery stream stocked
more with hillbillies than breakfast,
and satisfied our shriveling stomachs with yogurt from a
Joplin supermarket.

Amarillo is falling asleep to caterpillar nests tree after tree
on the one Oklahoma highway without a toll.

Amarillo is the Texas sky cracking like an overturned semi.
And hail pounding on the roof,
granting relief from the torment of bedsprings
screaming from the room next door.

Amarillo is a hundred miles from Tucumcari.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

D.E. Fredd

The Antibody

Heathrow could not touch things,
They always shied away from him.

He was magnetic, but in the anti-sense of the word.
He repelled rather than attracted so there was always
This distance you see . . .

Perhaps you can't see. One can't see distance.
It's best imagined or sat through on long trips,
A medium through which going and coming exist.
But Heathrow —

Heathrow, though he couldn't touch things, he
Knew they were there, could feel their distance
The way some men feel the approach of rain in their joints.

And when it was farther he felt it,
And when he came ever so close an aura gripped him as well
Because he was magnetic, but in the anti-sense of the word
So that things kept their distance or went farther into
Darkened corners to the degree that, as he aged, he thought
They mocked him.

His mind tricked him into thinking that.
And what he saw, at one time, as a simple game of monkey in
The middle now grew to be a conspiracy, and so he ceased
Concentrating on things, the pain they caused him and
Specialized in distance, that's what mattered anyway,
Narrowing, calculating, keeping charts and graphs.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He measured it out, this distance.
It gave him solace to know that he would be able to move
From close to closer someday.

And, then, when he did finally make that move it cost him
750 dollars not counting insurance and packing cartons,
But he paid it gladly even though there was still some
Distance, always would be.

He concentrated on that expanse that was left.
His gap he called it.
Two years went by and he felt it more because as you
Get old you magnetism gets worse and worse.

Then in October he finished the final map, the final column
Of numbers, latitude and longitude, into the ledger and
Set the compass aside. He paid a man from Columbus to take
Him on the turnpike. This time he didn't move anything;
No packing, he just went. It cost him $23.75 for gas and
Tolls and another $60.00 to the driver.

When he got there he sat all night in the park. In the
Morning he was 62 and his magnetism had begun to affect
His memory. He woke up thinking he was here instead of
There and when he finally got things turned around he
Threw away his map thinking he was close enough to walk it.

Someone told him Franklin Street just to get rid of him.
He walked north and his magnetism began to pain his chest.
He turned west and it subsided, east and it left him entirely.
Yet Franklin was still north and he couldn't make it due to that
Pain, even to turn in that direction caused an ache.

So he told the officers about it and they managed a
Squad car for him. He protested somewhat when the pain
Began again. They cruised up towards Chase and then cut
Across the Boulevard because they thought he had family on

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Franklin. He tried to explain magnetism, its effect on
Distance and the heart as you get older but his voice
Failed him. It seemed to tighten up like a watch spring to a
Certain pitch, then snapped and he went loose all over the
Back seat just as they hit the lower end of Franklin
There by the Gulf station.

Then they thought it best not to drive closer,
As it was they'd need to keep the casket closed.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Al Young

American Glamor

Is my dress appropriate?
Is my breath still fresh?
Will my underarms fail me?
What about my hair?
Should I have gotten it shaped,
is it long enough
to proclaim to one & all
my true & lasting blackness?

It's the 7 a.m. flight.
Even the plane seems to yawn
as they test its engines
one by one in the historic fog of
San Francisco International.

The stewardesses in their
mini-skirted uniforms,
designed by some promotional committee
to make them look pretty & sexy,
look silly, look shot, look
O so American cheesecake!

There arent enough minutes
between now & landing to
savor these ridiculous niceties:
coffee in flight, token sweetroll,
documentary voice of the pilot,
Shucks folks . . .
droning the time, temperatures,
altitudes, cruising speeds . . .

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dozing amidst commuters who'd fall
into deep sleep if they only knew
they were up here with a poet
trying to play his nuttiness down,
I'm on my way to interview
the great Ray Charles on assignment.

Pacific Southwest Airlines into L.A. today
– Tomorrow? Who knows? Trans-World!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Al Young

New Orleans Intermission

"A lighted window holds me like
high voltage. I see . . . "
— Walter Benton
This is My Beloved

1

I see it zooming down
over the Bayou late April
morning of the brightest green
from the window of a jet named Nancy

Settling back childishly
in the sky all alone,
my secret hand waves light aside
to get a better look at
all the music coiling up
inside me again as I watch
this still virgin landscape

Is that the famous Mississippi
down there, are those the streets
Jelly Roll did his marching,
strutting & poolsharking in?
Was I really just born
a Gulf away from here or
carved like Pinocchio
from some thick dark tree below?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

2

The only way to love a city's
to live in it til you know
every door every store every
parkingmeter deadlawn alleycat
district smell pussy hotel
gumwrapper & wino by heart

Airborne all night my sleepy heart
leaps like windblown raindrops

I'm a very old baby re-entering
an unchanged world with a yawn

3

Yes I've lived here before
just as I know & can feel in my tongue
that I've tramped this earth as
storyteller & unaccountable thief
too many times before,
a displaced lover of spirit & flesh

Riding the St Charles trolley nights
an old American, classically black,
spots me as tourist & softly explains
how he don't have to take snapshots
no more since he can more or less
picture in his mind what's keepable

When I take this 15¢ ride, the cool
off-hour breeze tightening my skin,
I can tune in to people telling their
stories real slow in the form of asides
& catch myself doing a lot of smiling
to hold back tears.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Oldtimer tells me
why the fare on this line's so cheap:
"It's so the colored maids & cooks &
gardeners can git to they jobs & back
without it bein a strain on they pocket"

4

On Bourbon Street (North Beach or
Times Square) a fantailed redhead in
G-string & nothing else waves me
into a topless/bottomless joint with a
dogfaced barker posted at the door
who yips & howls: "C'mon in yall & see
southron gals takin off they draws
for just the price of a drink!"

It isn't
enough to laugh & rush in like a
prospective drunk that's in heat.

The point is that love & love alone
holds up my feet as they step from
Bourbon to Rampart Street, dreaming of
Congo Square, Creole intrigue, Fats
Domino & Dr John while a black hippie
(cross between Satchmo & Papa John Creach)
hits on me for 50¢ in front of Al Hirt's

5

Steaming hot down in front of us now:
ham/biscuit eggs grits cajun coffee
& a solid glass of buttermilk for me
for fun —

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It's Mom's in the morning
where American poet Miller Williams
leans past his dark wife Becky to say:
"You probly the only Californian that
really knows about this place, man"

I know I'll slip back by for gumbo
for lunch known down here as dinner,
or for a supper of 90¢ crawfish bisque

But right now it's the light quivering
in from the street down onto our plates
that makes us quit talking poetry

"I'd give up writing." Miller sighs,
"if I could sing as good as Ray Charles"

Tomorrow they'll drive back to the Ozarks
Tomorrow I'll fly back to California
where there're no nickel phonecalls,
pick up the show from where I left off
& read Marie Leveau the Voodoo Queen

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gary Gildner

The Runner

Show the runner coming through the shadows,
show him falling into a speckled rhythm,
and then show the full expression of light,
there, where the trees quit and the road
goes on alone, marked by the moon-glazed gravel

Show the runner trying to disappear
where sky and road meet far in the distance,
show him always a step too late,
show a train going by hauling a long silence,
and show the runner leaving the road
where the killdeer starts from a charred stump

Show the runner saying the names of streams
as if he were working off days in Purgatory,
show the Chocolay, the Rifle, the Fox,
show the Laughing Whitefish, the Escanaba,
show the runner's pocketful of worms
and show the runner's father
sitting alone by a hole in the ice

Show the runner stoping at farm after farm
until a woman appears who is wearing a child's
pink kimono over her shoulders,
show her feet in hunting socks,
show a kitchen arranged in cream and linoleum,
show that the wind has toasted her cheeks,
show that she doesn't know what he wants

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Show the runner's old room, the crucifix
he tied fresh palms around each year,
show the five nice birch his father planted,
show the two blue spruce, the silver maple,
show the cherry from the nursery that was going broke,
show the man who said take it for a buck,
show the hail storm that knocked them over

Show the runner setting out all spruced up,
show the sun, poached, above a grove a leggy birch,
show the runner cruising down a cowpath
trying to catch his breath,
and show the slim white limbs dividing
letting him in

Show the runner peeling bark
show him scratching messages with sticks,
then show him diving into a drift,
nosing like a mole out of season,
rolling over and over
and yipping for luck or in pain

Show the runner approach the only light
in Little Lake, there, over the grocer's
fading pack of Camels,
show the grocer chewing Redman,
listen to him play his pocket change
and resurrect the dead,
listen to him spit them back

Show the runner running on,
show the moon, then show it stalking him
across the road into the second growth,
show the runner's father in his garden
blue and out of breath and looking hard
at something nothing can distract him from,
show the lake all frozen over,
show the mound of snow

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

W.S. Merwin

Demonstration

It is nothing new
for horses to be harnessed to hemispheres
it has happened at intervals
since the famous first experiment
when we know how to do a thing
we do it again

night or day the horses
are hitched up in teams
hemispheres are brought together
half to half
all the air is drawn out from between them
the seal is as wax
at a command the teams begin to haul
raising the vibrating chains
and the sphere

the horses lean into the collars and the links grind
but the halves hold together
in the grasp of the breath of the earth

there is an art to matching the teams
and to driving them
lashes crackle
bodies suffer rulers watch
while the hemispheres hold together
to the limits of matter

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

between them is
nothing
a nothing that is made
and is never perfect
the sight in an empty socket at night
the everlasting decision
approaching the point of origin
the first fire
still without color
exploding inward
drawing the unlit firmaments after it

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stephanie Eve Bernstein

Anamnesis

You have lost something. You look for it. You find a key in your pocketbook. A picture. Two books of matches from Baltimore alley restaurants. Your mind has slipped in ways that you cannot explain.

You stand at an intersection. Under your tongue lie words that you cannot remember. You can say them no longer. Try as you might you cannot move them back into your throat.

Behold: beyond tremors and angel hair you see him. He looks older. He carries a briefcase and smiles and smells of lemon.

– You look good, Babe.
– So do you.
– I know.

He presses one of your nipples between his thumb and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

index finger. Then he removes his shoes and socks.

His briefcase reveals the following: a brown and beige pinstriped shirt from an old girlfriend; a brown and black polka dot tie from a recent girlfriend; a postcard of the Miami coastline from a new girlfriend; a bottle of Pernod you gave him six months ago that he had not opened yet; and a reprint of an article entitled, "The Hypothalmus and Orgasm" which he wrote last year.

He hides in the bathroom with the water running. You cannot remember to whom you last made love. In you he feels triumphant. He laughs at your dreams and you kick him during the night. In a dream you carry a shovel for filling holes and for defending yourself. You carry it in your pocketbook and discover it as you reach for your compact. It becomes a bird and flies up into a tree. The tree falls down and you put it into your bag. The bird returns with a card in its beak. The card belongs to the King of Pentacles from the Marseilles deck. On the back of the card you find his address.

You sit in a restaurant. The notebook which will contain your poem lies on the table. Near you, three people toss their memories on to the center of the table. "I never had a goal all the time I was in high school." "I had a letter from a doctor saying I was sick." "My mother taught me the samba." A woman in a snake print dress with pointed tits walks by. "True, but when I – " "Precisely!" Laughter. "But the man gave me five." Laughter falling syllable by syllable like the first stages of sobbing. "She can have children then." "You have to look at the history of Spain." The woman with the pointed tits stops. She looks around, inserts her thumb into her nostril, drops her hand and walks on.

You stand at an intersection. Men rush by smelling of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pipes and spray deodorants. You stretch your neck. A trance comes over you, a revolving of the hips, a rotating of the head. Somewhere you signed your name and left. You hail a cab.

You enter a room. She crouches in a corner crying. You place your hand on her shoulder, she removes it. You might ask her name, you might ask her to stop. But she pains you. You grow angry now, slap her face, grab her arms and force her up. She screams, claws fiercely at your face and hair. You shake her hard, her shrieking head grotesquely close to yours. You let go suddenly and she falls to the floor. She crawls back to her corner and you close the door quietly.

The crop failed this year. So this morning, when you cleaned out your closet, you searched through the pockets of you winter clothes. No, you cannot have your clothes cleaned without emptying the pockets:

– What is it?
– What do you mean?
– What is it?

The summer continues as follows: You resume your position by the desk. The ashtray fills, empties, then fills again. It overflows, cats jump into it, butts fall on to the couch. You rub the ashes into the fabric.

– I love it.
– What is it?
– Bach.
– Chaconne?
– Prelude.
– Chaconne.
– Prelude in C Minor.
– Smart-ass.
– Milton Cross rides again.
– Come on, Babe.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

– Where?
He smiles and takes off his shirt.
– What is it?
– That scar. Where did you get it?
– Would you believe a bayonet in Korea?
– No.
– It might not be the case.
He unzips his pants.
– Intuit?
– Intuit.
– I never heard anyone use it before.
– Webster rides again.
– A neologism.
– Hardly. Why do I make you panic?
–Hardly.
You reach your hand into your bag of tricks.
– What is it?
– Bach?
– No, Vivaldi.
– Bach.
– We've been through this before.
– You've been through it all before, haven't you?
Hiatus.
– Why did you do that?
– What?
– Leave. Leave like that. Why?
– I had to.
– I don't understand.
– You won't.

A phone rings.
– Villas in Berne?
– What?
– Villas in Berne?
You pause. No doubt a call of importance. The phone lies seductively in your lap. Brushing back hair from the corner of your mouth you answer.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

– No.
– Congratulations. I'll call you back.

A tear slides to the corner of your mouth. Someone has taken all your poems away. They came in a U-Haul and carried them out – in wooden crates, over-seas trunks, paper bags and metal filing cabinets. You asked, "Who are you? Who sent you?" but they said, "Lady, step aside!"

The crop had failed before. Your mother ailed til almost Christmas, when she died. The opaque afternoons hung close. You sealed your dreams in vacuum jars and stacked them in piles of three under your bed. Papa spent long hours watching you. You sensed he had many things to say and he said none of them.

Your mind assumes a clarity familiar in its resonance. You search for something to chew. Your words no longer seem firm enough.
– Why did you do it?
– I had to.
– That means nothing to me.
– It meant nothing to you.
– What does that mean?
You realize you never saw him from the back. You realize this too late.
– Why did you leave?
– You had fallen asleep.
– Why didn't you try to wake me?
– You told me to go to hell.
– I don't believe that.
– You probably won't.
He strikes a match for his pipe on the zipper of his boot. You sit in the hotel dining room having breakfast. It seems right it should end here.
– When are you leaving?
– Tonight.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

– My plane leaves at noon.
– So you said.
– You're not coming back with me?
– So you said.
– I didn't say that.
– You may as well.

He orders two number six breakfasts. Coffee for the lady, tea for himself.

– No wine this morning?
– No.
– Nothing to celebrate, is that it?
– Please Babe, enough.

You walk out of the dining room alone. In the lobby a convention of gospel singers wear white corsages. They do not nod as you walk by. You want to talk to someone. The uniformed woman in the Ladies Room remarks on your outfit. She hands you a towel. Perhaps you just feel hungry. You return.

– More coffee?
– Thank you.
– When are you leaving?
– Tonight.
– I meant what time.
– Seven-forty.
– How will you get there?
– My uncle. Do you want me to go with you to the airport?
– No it's not necessary. Let me give you some money.
– No, it's not necessary.

You choke momentarily on your scrambled eggs. You see that he eats cinnamon toast, that he eats it for comfort. You guess that his mother had made it on days when he felt bad. Cinnamon toast and poached eggs and tea. How perfect.

– I'll take twenty to shop with this afternoon.
– Here's two tens.

He asks the doorman for a taxi.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

– Maybe things will be better next time.
– Sure.
– Here's a twenty. Go buy a dress or something.
– Sure. (you put it in your pocket with the others)
– I'll miss you, Babe.
– Sure.
– Maybe there won't be a next time.
– Sure there will.
– Don't get picked up this afternoon.
– You picked me up.
– That was different.
– That was eight months ago.
– Is that all?
– Is that *all*?
– Here's another twenty. (he squeezes your hand)
– I'm sorry. It's not my fault but I'm sorry.

He hands the doorman two quarters and throws his briefcase on the front seat.

– Here's a ten. (he stuffs it into your pocket) Take a cab to the airport.
– Sure.

II.

She passed through the gate singing to herself. She always sang songs she could not finish, always faltered on the last four notes. She stopped before she could view the house completely. Sheltered by a tree, she removed a compact from her purse and examined her face. She practiced raising her left eyebrow.

–There. Good. Now move your head up a little to the left but keep your eyes down.

–Do you believe the camera?

–What?

She sat crouching in the corner of a fireplace. The deserted farmhouse which once contained it had long since burned down. Arson, they called it. Besides the fireplace, only a crippled stairway remained. Weeks later, while examining the photographs, she tried to understand the expression on

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

her face.

III

"She became a woman of letters, since determination is all it takes and genius is subservient to good penmanship. The circularity of her reasoning leaves her little time for eschatology." This she wrote of herself in the introduction to her senior thesis.

She distinguished herself by exemplary posture. Her breasts measure little more than a radius of four inches, depending on the angle of course. Her left breast measures approximately three-eights of an inch smaller than the right, which occurs as a matter of course in most non-ambidextrous people. It bears by way of distinction a hair of coarse black which grows intermittently (between lovers). An ample woman; a bit out of her century.

She has a neck like a stalk with an artichoke upon it. A hummingbird? A Venus fly trap? After the fourth suicide attempt her wrist looked like a tic tac toe board. After the fifth she received skin grafts. She puzzled the doctors.

– Why are you trying to kill yourself?

– I have time on my hands.

Yet she yielded to them all, the croaks of frogs in the night, the croaks of men in the night, the visions she precipitated to a halt. She usually slept things off.

Often she painted; sometimes she danced; frequently she sculpted; occasionally she wrote; recurrently she sang; habitually she acted.

– You're a witch.

– So I've heard.

– I intended that to be an insult.

Perhaps sentences later she found another in his boxer shorts, lying on his left side in her bed. She did not feel

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

excited.

– You're kinky.

– What is it?

– Boots and whips.

She had ceased defending herself. Impressionistic phrases rushed into her mouth. An offering did not seem essential. Dry, she lay facing him on her right side. He had spoken.

– What?

– I'm going to get you.

She heard the doorbell ring.

– In what respect?

– In all respects.

– Is that kinky?

– No, global. (he smiles)

She answered the door. She made small talk. He did not emerge from her bedroom. She fixed herself a drink. Another. Then she excused herself and returned.

She disliked his boxer shorts. He did not whisper her name. He drew his breath in three parts. He said that he loved her, that getting her would seem like trapping a hummingbird in a net.

– In what respect?

– We are discussing the difference between local and global.

She felt a drop of perspiration begin its course from under her chin, down her neck, down between her breasts and disappear.

– In what respects don't you have me?

– In all respects.

She frowned. Her frown indicated her sympathy with his plight.

– I'm not going to get you.

She exhaled and closed her eyes. She rolled over onto him. Her hair fell like a screen over their faces. His lips felt dry as she kissed him. Her eyes remained closed.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Frederick Morgan

Elves

The notion of living entities in human shape, intelligent but not human: look upon it as an experiment conducted upon the stuff of being. Shall they be smaller than we? Bushier, perhaps? What impulses bring about these particular condensations? To what extent do the alien existences depend upon certain crystallizations of our own thought, perhaps upon our very words? Shall we postulate *elves*, speaking the word aloud so as to give life to a certain meaningful vibration? But then we have become responsible for them and must find them a bodily home. Is the preference for frail and exquisite manikins? Or elongated, wispy personages clad in forest green? Or small fat burly chaps with beards? "The elves hold their revels," I say. "They revel on the meadows in the moonlight." The stage is set; the action begins. Little whiskery creatures cavort in the pale gloam, guzzle beer from oaken kegs, kick off their britches and fart, and let their balls swing in the midnight breezes. These elves are from a vulgar tradition, which I happen to like.

"Eleven elves reveled on the level velvet veldt." I summoned them long ago: their existence is not in question. Secure in their borderland homes, they inhabit a climate well adjusted to their several moods, and maintain a well-recognized pattern of activity – which is, to be sure, somewhat circumscribed and ritualistic. But there is a twelfth elf, a doubting Thomas, who observes them as they fulfill their moonlit rounds but himself neither moves nor speaks.

I go out by night and watch them occasionally, under a sky of indigo.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Frederick Morgan

Pterodactyls

I have always regarded them as friends. Somewhat grotesque, but dutiful in their comings and goings, and forming a necessary link in the chain of existence. I was therefore displeased, at age thirteen, to see one crumpled between the paws of a hulking apish brute and tossed to the waves below as if he were no more than the flimsy wreckage of an archaic and defective aeroplane. There was a structure here that merited more consideration.

It is true that one will occasionally, flying through an open window at night, seize a sleeping girl – naked or in filmy night-dress – and abscond with her to some distant mountain or inaccessible roof-top. But her fate is not desperate. He will usually bring her directly back to her own room and bed – after having set her down in that lonely place, stalked about her three or four times in awkward circles, and given her the once-over with his unblinking quizzical gaze. (Perhaps even, with his long bony beak, pecked gently once or twice at her nipples or belly-button.)

Counterbalancing this foolishness, one must insist on their usefulness as messengers. Featherless birds, hovering between the serpent and the angel, they possess an intelligence which is more than vestigial but limits itself to immediate practicalities. Their lack of imagination is refreshing: without drama or self-aggrandizement they may bring tidings from above or below. When one of them comes looming down and settles himself before you, creaking flapping – then takes an ungainly step and, cocking his ugly head, looks squarely into your eyes – you will know he brings a message that had best be heeded.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Frederick Morgan

Nightwatchers

We hear them at dawn, a small golden singing that comes from many leagues off, distorted by distance . . . Or from the innermost coilings of our own ears . . . And laughter, that begins and ends with the sound of wind passing through leafy branches. Were they in our rooms watching us while we slept? Or amusing themselves in the moonlight of our quiet furniture?

Mysterious ringings and tinklings! Do they have bells, musical instruments? Or do they summon up these sounds from powers that rest within ourselves? It is, in any case, a music to which no meaning may be assigned.

Yet it tempts us, with a suggestion of departures. From our silent rooms, in which (if we could but observe them at a time when they are totally unobserved) a faint track of motion might perhaps be detected; from our sleeping bodies (are we inside or outside them when they sleep?), out of whose webwork entire creations have risen into being; and from the specified, given world — as when someone steps away from a mirror and his reflection disappears.

We think of them as of a multiplicity of individual entities, in communication with one another, each one perhaps searching our world for his mortal twin. At dawn, as our windows grow palely bright and bodies recover the awareness of self, they withdraw into the eternal forest: where they dream of us, as we — sometimes — of them.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Patricia Griffith

Dust

A seven year drouth plagued East Texas in the '50's. The rich, black, river bottom land crusted and cracked like a near-emptied paint can. Boll weevils scourged the cotton fields year after year and the farmers grew dry and tired and hopeless with the land.

One spring day a county agent strolled through the long rows of new cotton plants fresh green and not half way to his knees. He squatted between the dusty rows counting insects on random groups of twelve plants, then he raised his young face to the glum, sun tempered farmers around him and recommended a crop duster. The farmers nodded and went their ways to borrow money.

The duster appeared three weeks later on one warm Friday afternoon buzzing over the two commercial streets of town in a red Stearman bi-plane, flying low over the flat topped one story buildings and not far above the telephone poles. People ran from the stores and stopped their cars to gaze. Sally Bills at cheerleader practice raised her

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

orange crepe paper pom-pom against the blue sky and saw the plane buzzing around beyond the gym, then with the other cheerleaders she hopped into a '51 Studebaker and followed the plane out Farm-to-Market 319.

Sally Bills was sixteen. Her eyes were blue, her lips were pink from just a brush of Tangee lipstick. Her eyebrows were unplucked and her hair curled naturally. Her steady boyfriend, Billy Hutchinson, could encircle her waist with his hands. The only thing wrong with Sally Bills was a chipped eyetooth from falling off a horse onto a pig trough when she was twelve.

Sally Bills had never dated anyone but Billy Hutchinson. They started church dating when she was thirteen. They'd sit on the back row of the Baptist church and touch hands. He was a country boy, big and solemn. There was talk that he'd make the all-State football team that year. She felt clever with him and easy. She would marry him after graduation and then her father, Texas A&M '30, would send them both to college. She would major in elementary ed, he, agriculture. She would teach school a year before her children began to come. Billy would join the National Guard and eventually take over her father's farm, two thousand acres, the site of the county agent's stroll three weeks before.

The cheerleaders sang as they sped out the highway . . .

"If you lov-v-v-ed me half as much as I loved you . . . "

The red Stearman bi-plane stopped in front of a scattering of poor whites' shacks outside the city limits. A skinny yellow dog pulled himself out from under the underpinnings of a shack and barked hoarsely at the plane and the green pickup and the cars and the cheerleaders piling out of the Studebaker with their orange pom-poms. The dirty red plane looked old-fashioned and flimsy as a kite. Along the side was inscribed in neat, black letters, "THE PEARLY THOMAS."

The pilot removed his goggles, drew out an Australian soldier's hat pinned up on one side and plopped it on his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

balding head. He hopped down from the plane light as a grasshopper and not much over five feet even in his hat and yellow cowboy boots. He smiled . . . a cavalier, with worndown yellow teeth coated with tobacco stain, thin, greasy tufts of rusty colored hair poking from the sides of the hat. His skin was deeply tanned and creased. Strutting up and down, ignoring the kids crawling on his plane, shaking hands as he went, he announced himself: Weedy Revenall. The crop duster to solve their problems. His shrill voice spit words like a carnival barker.

"Before long there won't be an insect in the county," he droned. Then his eyes fell on smiling Sally Bills. He turned away toward the shacks semi-circled by pine trees, the naked ground sloping down from the highway, the tar papered out-houses, bulging as though inflated.

He was born in Hall County he said turning back, but he'd been raised mostly in Bangkok, Thailand where his father was a Baptist missionary.

Shaking hands with Sally Bills he said he'd served his country in World War II.

His hand was rough and cool and he held on. His lips looked soft and moist like a woman's.

Meanwhile Homer Bills, a large man with faded blue eyes left his pickup, hitched up his khakis and started across the road. Sally's face reddened and Weedy let her hand go throwing his arms open saying this country reminded him of the area around Sydney, Australia.

Homer Bills introduced himself. Weedy smiled showing his small yellow teeth. His small, dark eyes flicked from Homer to Sally and back again. He told Mr. Bills he was looking forward to working with him and solving his problems. Homer Bills rubbed his head. He was not a man of easy conversation. He gave the duster directions to his house where he could park his plane and sleep in the room beside the garage.

Sally said goodbye to her friends. She slid into her father's pickup beside Charlie Willard who worked for her

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

father and who looked as weathered and lean as an old barn. His vocal chords had been damaged at an early age by bad sweet milk he claimed. "The Pearly Thomas," he read in his squeaky voice as they drove away. The pickup gathered speed passing the stunted pines, the scrub oaks. The great tangle of Sally's orange pom-pom spilled over them like a shredded pumpkin.

"I reckon," Charlie Willard said, "just from looking at that runty feller, we'll be lucky to have a tractor amongst us by the time he leaves town . . . .

"I hear them's always drinkers. That poison gets into their systems, near drives em crazy."

"Isn't that sad?" Sally sighed.

Homer Bills said all he was interested in was getting rid of some of those bugs. If the man could do that he'd be satisfied.

The plane appeared, circled. Homer Bills and Charlie Willard flagged from either end of the pasture. The Pearly Thomas bumped in for a landing. Beside the stocktank two jersey cows watched calmly like a reception committee.

That night in the Bills' house the farmers gathered. They deposited their straw hats on the bed in the sitting room and sat in their khakis and overalls sipping iced tea. Weedy Revenall watched Sally's small bottom as she side-stepped in the circle of men pouring tea.

"Had a white face heifer give birth to twin calves this spring," a farmer said.

"Heard some feller across the river made a hundred bushels of sweet potatoes on a non-irrigated acre last year."

After awhile they told Weedy Revenall about their bad times.

Weedy smoked one Lucky Strike after another. Sometimes he held them between his teeth and sometimes a slight tic in the right side of his face would flicker for an instant like a short in a neon light. His yellow boots hung over a rung of straight backed chair and he rocked dan-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gerously back and forth on two legs. After listening awhile he settled the chair on four legs and leaned forward.

"Well," he said. "There ain't nobody in Las Vegas, Nevada that's as big a gambler as a man who puts his back forty in cotton."

The farmers shifted.

"It's the truth, God help me," he said.

Weedy Revenall looked down at his hand that held the cigarette and there was a flicker on the side of his face. "But there's something beautiful about a cotton field. Something like a miracle about little sprouts of cotton pushing outta them bolls . . . . But nowadays a man gotta experiment . . . try new ideas. Don't nothing come easy as it used to. I guarantee you men you'll bless the day you started dusting . . . ."

Then Weedy Revenall explained that it would take him a few days to prepare. He'd dust once, then he'd wait a week or two for the next hatch of insects and dust again.

The farmers were holding their hats, about to leave when Charlie Willard spoke in his creaky voice. He said his wife was a preacher's daughter and she thought all this dusting with chemicals was putting nature out of balance. The farmers scowled at him but Weedy took the charge seriously.

"Land ain't intended to produce so much of one crop," he explained. "A man plants 500 acres of cotton and weevils live off cotton, he's raising a crop of weevils, too. I figure dusting's important cause it's *restoring* the balance."

The farmers left feeling a surprised respect for Weedy Revenall despite his peculiar looks and in the next room Sally had listened respectfully to every word.

The next morning when she backed her yellow Henry Jay out of the garage Weedy Revenall appeared from the side door stretching his arms up, palms out, a thin buddha worshiping the fresh, blue sky.

He leaned on the opposite car door. "You look bright as a morning glory," he said. "Don't reckon you're going to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

town."

He wore a kelly green western shirt with mother-of-pearl buttons, fresh Levis no bigger than a boy's, and a beaded Indian belt that spelled "WEEDY" on the back. He looked newly scrubbed. His tooled yellow boots shone. At the road they met her father and Charlie Willard in the pickup, a cloud of dust trailing them.

"Where you going?" her father asked. His brow was wrinkled below his hat.

"To town," she said. She always went to town on Saturdays.

"Morning, Mr. Bills," Weedy Revenall ducked his head and smiled up at Homer Bills in the pickup. Then he leaned back resting his left arm on the back of the front seat.

"You going into town, Mr. Revenall?"

"Thought I'd take a look around," Weedy said, ducking his head and smiling.

Charlie Willard made a stripping sound in his throat and spat out the window.

"Be glad to give you a lift later on myself," Homer said.

Weedy took his time lighting a cigarette and flipping the match out the window. This time he didn't bother to duck his head.

"Much obliged, Mr. Bills. Guess I'll just go on here with your daughter."

Mr. Bills lifted his eyebrows at his daughter and raising his hand goodbye drove on.

Sally heard a new rattle in her car. All the pleasure of the day was drained by her father's disapproval. She wondered how he could be suspicious of a missionary's son.

"You're welcome to ride into church with us in the morning, Mr. Revenall, I guess you being a missionary's son you're regular as clock work on going to church."

Weedy stared glumly. The minutes passed. She was reaching out to turn on the radio and break the uncomfortable silence when he spoke.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"You seem like a nice girl," he said. "You'll soon learn what it's like on this earth. I ain't a handsome man. I ain't got a lot of money . . . . And I got a different way of making my living. I can't do nothing about them things. But your father thinks I don't have the right to sit in a car next to his daughter."

She glanced out the window as they passed a clearing in the woods where a mound of sawdust rose like a giant ant hill.

"He didn't mean anything like that," she protested. "Goodness, he'd never say anything like that, Mr. Revenall. My father is a good man."

"They's all good men," he said. "It's always good men that do the damage in the world. That's why I don't go to church, 'cause of all them good men. It's only plants and animals that's got any honor in this world and they don't count."

She pushed the accelerator down further so that the wind whipping through the car made talking difficult.

He raised his voice. "You won't find any god in churches."

He waited for her to ask, "Why no, Mr. Revenall?"

"If there's a god he's up there in them clouds," he said, "and I'll be obliged if you'll call me Weedy." His voice grew wistful and the wind carried some of it away. " . . . up there in them clouds . . . everybody . . . little insects . . . the sky fresh . . . all alone . . . pure . . . . "

He turned and spoke more loudly. "Always thought if I could live where everybody's flown . . . had the same kind of purifying experiences in the sky . . . might find some good people . . . . "

Sally told him she believed there were good people everywhere. Even in Russia there were good people and bad people. It was simply a matter of finding the good ones and being tolerant of the bad.

"It ain't a simple matter at all," he said. "People you gotta try out . . . like motors."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Near the Population 1,946 sign Sally exchanged honks with two cars. She slowed to see who was parked at the drive-in restaurant, waved at the manager as she passed the Chevrolet place, and stopped on the corner by the drugstore. As soon as she saw the WEEDY belt recede she felt once more happy with the day, and headed back toward the drive-in cafe to look for friends.

Post Office Cafe: Weedy Revenall devours two eggs sunny side up, fried ham, home cooked biscuits. Addresses local men, waitress Gracie Evans. Re: Flying big game hunters in Africa, meeting Ernest Hemingway.

Ned's Barber Shop: Gets a haircut. Addresses barbers, fellow customers. Re: Barnstorming through the South, Southwest, California doing batman jumps (mid-air acrobatics before opening of parachute); designing formations for Blue Angels.

Chevrolet Used Car Lot: Kicks tires, tries motors. Addresses acquaintances from Post Office Cafe and Ned's Barber Shop, two mechanics, three salesmen. Re: Flying Thunderbolt during World War II, shooting down fourteen (14) Messerschmidts. Bailing out over the Brenner Pass. Survival by a. disguise as a Turkish monk. B. employment by the French underground. Demonstration of French language ability – a few words ending in "Anglais."

At four o'clock Weedy was waiting on the drugstore corner. Five minutes later Sally arrived smiling, groceries stacked in a box in the backseat, hair tied back with a blue ribbon. She spoke excitedly: Her third closest girl friend, Marsha Nell Adams had eloped the night before with a boy from DeWitt, Arkansas she'd known only two weeks.

Sally started out the highway. Weedy Revenall said it seemed like a nice little town. Sally said it *really* was. She turned on a radio request program and began singing along on "Don't Rob Another Man's Castle."

When they approached the place where Weedy had landed the day before he asked her to pull over. Sally hesitated, but because it would have seemed discourteous

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to do otherwise, she pulled over onto the gravel shoulder leaving the motor running.

Weedy flipped off the radio. It was quiet except for the humming of the motor. He looked out the open window toward the shacks beside the road. Three Rhode Island Reds and a white Leghorn were scratching at the bare ground. There were four large shacks and three small outhouse size buildings behind with a well and a pump off to the side. A utility wire ran from the road to the biggest shack. There the door was open though it looked simply like a hole in the middle. A tow-haired boy of five or six came to the door and stared at them.

"You see them shacks?" Weedy asked her. "That's where I growed up. It wasn't here, but it was like that out in Hall County, up in the panhandle."

He talked with only his head turned toward the shacks as though trying to separate as much of himself from the scene as possible.

"It's cold in them shacks in the wintertime. You can see daylight through some of them cracks in the wall. Nights we wore coats to bed."

The tow-haired boy jumped down from the opening of the shack and began kicking a rock toward them. He wore only a girl's pink panties too big for him pulled up to his thin chest. As soon as he'd hopped down, the yellow dog crawled out from under the shack and gave a few half hearted yelps.

"My mama made glue by cooking flour and water. She'd try to cover the holes in the wall with canned good labels .... And them kerosene stoves, they smoke something awful .... "

Weedy put a cigarette in his mouth, crumpled the pack and tossed it out the window. It made a glittering arc and caught the attention of the boy who'd worked his way near the car by kicking the rock. He ran up and squatted beside it, resting his chin on his dirty knees.

"In the night when it was freezing cold the animals

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

come up from the woods and crowded under the house. I'd wake up nights hearing them move underneath. At school I'd look at them clean washed kids and I'd think I had more in common with them animals than them kids."

A cloud of smoke spread against the windshield of the Henry Jay then drifted outward enveloping Sally.

"At Christmas church ladies would bring them snotty kids out to leave a bundle of food on the steps. They'd run back to the car and look, hoping we'd come out 'fore they drove off. We wouldn't though; we'd hide . . . . That's why I don't go to no church. I always see them women driving up the aisles carrying Christmas food bundles."

The little boy stood beside the car picking his nose and staring at them from narrow brown eyes. He had a straight strip of a nose and a round scaly ringworm patch on the side of his forehead.

Weedy reached in his pocket, pulled out a quarter, and flipped it toward the kid. The boy picked it up, wiped the dirt off it carefully, and moved back toward the car. He stuck out a tentative, dirty finger and touched the door handle, watching Weedy uncertainly.

"Git away, kid," Weedy Revenall muttered, "you ain't nothing." He motioned for Sally to drive on.

That night after Billy Hutchinson brought her home from a movie starring Roy Rogers and Dale Evans at Double R-Bar Ranch, cokes at the drive-in, and necking on the river, Sally told her father what Weedy Revenall had said that day. She paused in the door of the bedroom in the shadows hoping he wouldn't notice smudged lipstick or wrinkled clothes.

"I wouldn't pay much attention to what he has to say," her father said. He'd been waiting up for her, sitting in the big chair by the bed reading a farm magazine. His feet in white work socks were propped on a round plastic hammock. His face was two-tone red and white where his straw hat cut across his upper forehead. He looked tired.

"But that was interesting," she said, slipping off her

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sandals. "I've been passing those shacks all my life. I've even taken Christmas bundles there. But I never thought about it much . . . ."

Her father sighed and rubbed his forehead. She'd noticed that their conversations often embarrassed him and he would inject a mannerism between them.

"There's always been poor people, Sally. Always will be. You divide up all the money in the world, in six weeks it'll be back the same."

His voice sounded old and dried out. She'd heard that justification many times. It was always there; without turning any mental knobs it flowed out.

"Well, goodnight," she said and picked up her sandals.

In her own room she draped her cotton skirt and blouse over a chair, leaned over the dresser, resting her face in her hands, and stared into the mirror. Gritting her teeth she looked at the chipped eye tooth waiting there broken and ugly.

Sunday. After church Sally delivered a tray of food to Weedy Revenall. He opened the door in his stocking feet and she stepped back from the alcohol fumes that sailed out the door. Smiling moonily he thanked her, his eyes frayed with tiny red threads.

The next morning he supervised the building of a shed for his plane. Sitting under the wing of the plane, shaded from the sun, he talked to the three black men as they worked. He'd organized a farm cooperative outside of Baton Rouge he told them. Why, they should have land of their own! Organize cooperatives! Not spend their lives working other peoples' land!

That evening Charlie Willard reported.

'Why, Mr. Bills, we've hired us a commie sure as the world. Fomenting revolution amongst the niggers right out there in your pasture. We may not have our lands by the time this feller leaves."

Sally dropped a dollop of mayonnaise into her waldorf salad and said she thought co-ops were a good idea. Mr.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bills said he didn't think that necessarily meant Weedy Revenall was a communist. He turned back to the newspaper. Charlie Willard said he sure thought somebody oughta keep an eye out on that runty feller.

Tuesday. Weedy Revenall borrowed the pickup and drove to Texarkana to buy chemicals.

Wednesday. He worked on his plane, crawling around on it like a slug, Charlie Willard said, adding that he was beginning to think he could stomp out all those insects with his heels before Weedy Revenall would ever get airborne.

Thursday. Weedy in a rubber jump suit and mask mixed chemicals. Also put a windsock on the garage though he told Sally the best windsock in the world was the tail end of a cow.

Friday morning. The sky a gray lake in the east. The engine of the Pearly Thomas buzzing. Weedy loaded the drums from either wing. The dew, he said, would hold the dust to the plants.

The plane loaded, Weedy climbed into the cockpit and waved to the group watching. The Pearly Thomas taxied up the pasture and turned once before gathering speed for the takeoff. The plane rose with difficulty like a heavy tired old woman.

Sally looked toward the long horizon and thought how much sky was there and how seldom she noticed it. The plane crossed her vision, banking gracefully and then straightening and passing over the sun which was only an orange buoy on the east horizon. It cast an irridescent sheen over the red wings of the plane.

From the house she watched the plane descend to thirty feet over the field, a real wheel roller Weedy called it. Suddenly a mountain of dust erupted from the plane leaving a wide swath of gray fields behind it. The plane dipped and glided over the fields, then rose, turned, and dipped again. By mid morning the dew was gone and Weedy rested, waiting for late afternoon to dust again. Another morning and evening's work and the cotton fields

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were flocked as Christmas trees. There was nothing to do then but wait for the next hatch.

Anthonomus grandis, *of the family Curculionidae; snout beetle. Commonly known as the boll weevil. About one-fourth inch long, snout one-half length of body. Ugly! Both adults and larvae feed on the bolls, eggs deposited in cavities formed by eating into buds and fruit of plant. Usually requires two to three weeks for weevil to develop from egg to adult. Combated by dusting with chemicals, early planting, and destroying infected plants in the autumn.*

The week after dusting Weedy finagled himself a second hand Ford convertible. Afternoons he'd drive into town and hang out at the cafes and talk about flying. One night in the Post Office Cafe Leo Pinkham suggested Weedy do some stunt flying for the grand opening of his new John Deere tractor dealership. Weedy had been talking about being inspired as a child by Mable Cody's Flying Circus. He seemed surprised at Leo Pinkham's suggestion. He slicked his thin rusty colored hair back and there was a flicker on the side of his face.

"I'll pay you decent," Leo Pinkham said. "Whatever you think is fair." He cocked his red haired, round head waiting for an answer.

Weedy pulled a paper napkin out of the metal holder in the center of the table. He raised his coffee cup and folded the napkin into the saucer to sop up the spilled coffee and set his cup back down.

"You ain't yeller, are ya?" Charlie Willard asked, chewing on a matchstick.

Weedy looked beyond him at the jukebox in the corner. It was swirling bright colors and playing, *"I'll Walk the Line . . . . "* "It ain't nothing like that," he said.

By the end of the evening they all took it as decided.

It grew hot, sweltering, unremittingly hot by July.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There was no rain. The roads grew dustier, the fields drier. Each day before going to town Weedy would check a cotton field studying the rising green plants.

"They're not ready," he told Homer Bills the day before the tractor opening. He wiped the dust from off his yellow boots and shook his head. "Maybe two or three more days," he said.

AIR SHOW!

Dare Devil WEEDY REVENALL, Flying Ace

at

GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION

Leo K. Pinkham's Tractor Implement Co.
(Authorized John Deere Dealership)

Sat. July 12, beginning 12 noon
(in case of rain the next Saturday)

Highway 74, Next to the old gin

Entertainment by the ARKANSAS GENTLEMEN!!

Free Door Prizes: brand new John Deere tractor
'14 inch Muntz TV
electric ice cream freezer

Y'all Come!

Sally had an ominous gray feeling before she even opened her eyes that Saturday morning. Her body felt sticky against the bed clothes. The day before Weedy had removed the chemical tanks from the Pearly Thomas. There was talk of all sorts of dangerous tricks.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Gonna break his scrawny neck right there in front of the ladies," Charlie Willard had predicted.

Leo Pinkham had decorated the tractor shed with plastic streamers on wires like the used car lot down the road. The crowd began drifting in before noon commenting that there wasn't a breeze or a cloud to hide anything Weedy Revenall wanted to do up there. Many of them would stay all day and the men go straight to the stag fish fry on the river that night.

At one o'clock the Arkansas Gentlemen climbed onto a little platform between two tractors and started playing. Charlie Willard's wife said didn't a one of them look like a gentleman to her. Long sideburns! Glittery western shirts! Matching initial rings! People milled around the tractors listening.

In twenty minutes the glittery western shirts of the Arkansas Gentlemen were soaked.

"I'm throwing rice at the girl that I love . . .
After she just said I do . . . "

a blond Arkansas Gentleman twanged, sweat rolling down his tall forehead and trickling across his eyebrows and down his concave cheeks.

Two o'clock. The air show. The sheriff cruised up and down the road with his siren swirling and roadblocks were set up to allow the Pearly Thomas to land after the show. The crowd flowed outside and began looking for Weedy's plane.

The people waited. They stared up over the gravel, over the patch of johnson grass, the barbed wire fence across the road, across the field, and the field beyond that, and on and on to a nearly endless horizon, all of it as crisp and intractable as a beetle. They waited for thirty minutes, ladies cupping their hands over their eyes, children kicking up dust until they were all standing in a cloud. But all they saw across the road and the fields and the burning pearl sky was a flock of blackbirds that scattered from one fence to another.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sally stood at the edge of the crowd twisting her car keys. In her mind she'd seen herself rushing Weedy Revenall's broken body twenty miles to the nearest hospital to save his life. But now the idea was preposterous. It seemed impossible for that thin, cloudless sky to hold a plane at all.

" . . . be surprised if that little man ever did any stunt flying in his life!" a man said.

"I never seen a man could lie hour after hour like that little bastard."

When Leo Pinkham invited the crowd back inside to hear more from the Arkansas Gentlemen Sally slipped away. She ran down the hot asphalt past the line of cars parked along the highway and slid onto the hot plastic seat of the Henry Jay. She made a U-turn and floorboarded it . . . past the O'Donnell Hardware sign . . . the Lions Club Welcomes You . . . Population 1,946 . . . .

The plane sat in the shed, the convertible beside it. The windsock drooped. She turned off the motor and heard only the lonely sound of a rooster crowing in the distance. The sun seemed to have baked the life out of everything within sight and left the earth stunned and colorless.

"Mr. Revenall?"

The door was cracked. She pushed it open and stepped into the semi-dark room. The shade to the one window was pulled down. After the glare of the sun she could see nothing for a minute only smell . . . stale smoke . . . liquor . . . dirty socks . . . .

When her eyes adjusted she could see him sitting in the corner of the bed, leaning against a soiled, slipless pillow, his body bare above his levis, his short legs spread out before him on the bare mattress, the sheet in a heap at the bottom of the bed. His head leaned against the cheap knotty pine wall. He held a bottle in his hands. On the floor his yellow boots lay on their sides. He looked at her with no surprise or curiosity.

"People are waiting on you," she said. Her voice

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sounded loud and childish and frightened. "I just came to tell you that everybody in town is about to get sun stroke waiting on you."

He rocked forward. "That right?" he said. His voice had a sputter in it. There was a small triangle of hair in the middle of his chest. He looked miniature and repulsive to her and suddenly she wished she'd never come. She wished she'd stayed at the tractor shed and maybe she'd have won the Muntz TV.

"What they waiting on, reckon?"

"They're waiting on you to put on your air show like you've been talking about for weeks."

He dropped a cigarette into a coffee can on the floor beside the bed. A stream of smoke rose beside him slowly like a charmed snake.

"Some folks would think it was a sin for me to go out there and risk my neck for a bunch of white trash and niggers' Saturday entertainment . . . . "

He's drunk and crazy she told herself. You don't have to talk to him.

" . . . just wanting me to break my neck . . . ," he said petulantly.

She began to feel sorry for herself coming all the way out there to help him and receiving such an ungrateful reception.

He took a drink from the bottle.

"My plane's broke down," he said, " . . . have to order a part from Shreveport."

"Well, why didn't you tell people that. Why don't you drive in and explain what happened!"

He laughed suddenly holding the bottle with both hands against his stomach and letting his head roll back but his laugh was phony and humorless.

She wanted to leave but she felt trapped in her pleading. "If you heard what they're saying . . . . "

He snorted. "I been hearing it all my life."

She glanced through the open door beyond him to the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

little bathroom where the lid and seat to the john were raised and then quickly away to his face and then settled on the bottle he was holding and stared at it for a moment waiting for him to speak. But he said nothing.

"You're not coming?"

He took a drink from the bottle and set it on the floor, swung his legs over the side of the bed, and fumbled for his boots. One of them slid toward her and she picked it up and stepped forward to hand it to him. As soon as she was within reach he grabbed her arm and pulled her toward him. She could feel his arm cool and hard and sinewy like a rope, and smell his sour breath in her face.

"You know . . . some countries a man comes into another man's house . . . he's offered whatever woman's available be it wife or daughter . . . it's the polite thing to do."

Up close his eyes were dull and uneven as though there were droplets of glue in them.

When she pulled away he released her easily. The boot fell between them making a loud "clop" as it hit the floor and Weedy started. He reached for the bottle and propped himself back up on the bed.

"You're just like all of them crackers. You don't care if I break my neck long as I put on my little show . . . hillbillies . . ," he muttered.

No one had ever said such things to her. She felt her face hot and stinging and her hands trembling. *You can't talk like that to me*, she wanted to scream. She could feel the fury bringing tears and knew she had to say something quickly.

"Your daddy wasn't any missionary in Bangkok, Thailand," she charged shrilly and unexpectedly.

He stared up at her. There was a flick on the side of his face and when he laughed it was real.

The laugh followed her outside the door, through the bright afternoon and into the house where for the first time in her life she locked the door behind herself. In her

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bedroom she threw herself on the bed and cried hating Weedy Revenall, wishing mayhem would befall him. She cried and cried until the reason she was crying was no longer clear to her but she was crying for her whole, young uneventful life.

When the tears stopped she daydreamed. She lay on her back on the now rumpled bed and daydreamed of stealing the Pearly Thomas and flying to another country. Of becoming famous and rich and receiving an apology from Weedy Revenall. She daydreamed until all that remained of the day itself was night.

Saturday night. Billy Hutchinson at the stag fish fry. Sally at home; washing her hair, pressing a dress for church. There was no sound from Weedy Revenall's room. At 10:30 Sally went to bed.

It was after midnight when she woke hearing the cars stopping along the road. She lay in bed afraid, her heart thumping. The room was dark cubes of varying grays. Car doors slammed. Laughter, raucous, drunken, muffled. She stood beside the window looking beyond the light in their drive to the figures moving toward the plane shed. The plane waited in the darkness like a chained prisoner.

The men gathered around it and after a short while there was a great burst of flame that sounded like a mighty yawn. It rose from the tail of the plane and spread up the length of it and across the wings. The flames lapped at the body. There were spits of fire where the chemical tanks had been and soon the shed was burning. When small streamers of fire broke outward toward the pasture the men moved quickly stomping them out.

Sally heard her father move in the next room. She pictured the two of them standing at their respective windows in their bare feet watching.

It was strangely quiet. She could sometimes make out a figure standing back from the fire. She saw Charlie Willard, waving Weedy Revenall's goggles, move to the convertible

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and soon the rag top was burning. The men moved back enlarging their circle around the fires. When they moved she saw a man laughing at Billy Hutchinson who was bent vomiting beside the stock tank.

The smell of the burning plane slowly filled her room. She watched the figures familiar to her; watched them move around the fires, talk to one another, laugh. Some seemed serious, intent, committed to restoring their own balance. And she had known them, she thought; had believed them as predictable as her broken eye tooth, had believed them singular, not thoughtless bodies capable of generating destruction in the dark. She felt a calm contempt for them as she watched, and she watched until the fires died and they left, backing away from the glowing mound and turning, fading away into the darkness together.

When the doors were slammed and the cars gone she looked out toward the cotton field beyond the pasture and waited. She could see the line of the plants, like a black fence against the sky. She imagined the stirring of all those new brown snouted bodies. In the darkness, as though lightning flashed, she pictured all the green leaves falling to the earth at once. She saw the field as barren and colorless as the burned plane.

The men had been gone for nearly an hour when Weedy emerged. Carrying his duffel bag and a bottle he walked unsteadily across the back lot and out to the pasture. The shed had collapsed on top of the plane so that what remained was only a blackened hulk like a burned out chicken house. Now and then a breeze would cross it and generate a flicker of light.

Weedy paced around the plane bending once to pick up his goggles. Carefully he knocked the broken glass from the frames and adjusted the empty metal rims around his eyes. After that he moved quickly to the car, threw the duffel bag into the backseat and climbed in under the skeleton of his rag top. The engine was slow to start and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

then he raced it a minute before backing out the gate. He circled around behind the house stopping long enough to take a long drink. When he finished he flung the brown bottle against their concrete steps. It shattered into a million brown glittery pieces.

Suddenly the car started down the drive and passed under the light beside the house. The empty eyed goggles turned toward her as it passed. Sally leaned forward, raised her hand in a wave, which motionless became a salute. The car inched forward as though he were waiting. She pushed the latch of the screen letting it fall away and leaned far out into the dark. The car accelerated then and she watched it move down the drive and rattle over the cattle-guard. It turned onto the road and fairly flew toward the highway.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

S.J. Sackett

Epistemology

I will build you a flag of how I know:
I am counting blackbirds as they fly away,
When you walk by,
And I think of you while I keep counting.
My mind gives me the number thirty-eight.
Thirty-eight is an impossible number;
No matter how many birds there were,
They cannot have been thirty-eight.
Yet the however many blackbirds there were
Have flown away beyond recounting.
The number thirty-eight is wrong,
But it is the best number I have.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Everette H. Maddox

Thirteen Ways of Being Looked at by a Possum

1
I awake, three in the morning, sweating
from a dream of possums.
I put my head under the fuzzy swamp of cover.
At the foot of darkness two small eyes glitter.

2
Rain falls all day: I remain indoors.
For comfort I take down a favorite volume.
Inside, something slimy, like a tail, wraps around my finger.

3
Hear the bells clang at the fire station:
not hoses, but the damp noses of possums issue forth.

4
Passing the graveyard at night
I wish the dead would remain dead,
but there is something queer and shaggy about these mounds.

5
From the gray pouch of a cloud
the moon hangs by its tail.

6
At the cafeteria they tell me they are out of persimmons.
I am furious. Who is that gray delegation
munching yellow fruit at the long table?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

7
I reach deep into my warm pocket
to scratch my balls; but I find, instead,
another pocket there; and inside, a small possum.

8
My friend's false teeth clatter in the darkness
on a glass shelf;
around them a ghostly possum forms.

9
At an art gallery the portraits seem to threaten me;
tails droop down out of the frames.

10
I screech to a stop at the red light.
Three o'clock, school's out:
eight or ten juvenile possums fill the crosswalk.

11
Midnight at Pasquale's. I lift my fork,
and the hard tails looped there
look curiously unlike spaghetti.

12
When I go to the closet to hang my shirt on the rack,
I have to persuade several possums to move over.

13
Drunk, crawling across a country road tonight,
I hear a shriek, look up, and am paralyzed
by fierce headlights and a grinning grill.
The Possum Truck! I am as good as gone.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Everette H. Maddox

Big Night With My Own Thoughts

After midnight, lying in bed thinking of you,
I heard a squeal, and let the cigarette fall
From my fingers like a petal, as I watched the window open
Letting in thoughts I hadn't even known I had:
A phalanx of possums, the moon, an old classics teacher
Who was hooting out "Dixie" across a milk container.

I sat up, took a swipe at the crumpled container,
And knocked it out of his hands, much the way you
Used to knock my head off (you were my favorite teacher!),
Was it yesterday, or a year ago last fall?
Anyway, gesturing at everything I had,
I made it plain to the crew that my house was open.

Already the possums had the ice-box door open
And were trying to push the moon inside that container –
A fruitless endeavor, as persimmons were all I had,
Having sent the rest of the Burgundy to you.
They cringed, as did I, to hear the moon-beams fall
Like bass-notes onto the head of the classics teacher.

While the possums boogied around the prostrate teacher,
I grinned and tried to pry my tobacco tin open,
Realizing this was the first fun I'd had all fall.
And, better, when I got into the container,
It wasn't tobacco at all, but a last gift from you.
I didn't even think you'd smoked – evidently you had.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The orgy was in full swing: the possums had
Discovered the persimmons, and the venerable teacher
Was starting to revive, looking at pictures of you
In my wallet, which happened to be lying open;
And the moon had climbed to the top of the milk container
Where it didn't seem to know it was riding for a fall.

But I'd heard the story of another fat one's fall,
And I wasn't surprised when it crashed. What the possums had
Was a fatal case of green persimmons. The container
Had been flattened from receiving the weight of the classics
teacher
When a heart attack had popped his waistcoat open:
He'd died, poor man, abashed by the thought of you.

For me, though, a fortunate fall. Not thinking of you,
I silently heaved possum container, moon-fragments, and teacher
Out the window with all I had, and left it open.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Everette H. Maddox

Welcome Home

I understand:
for years, perhaps, you have lived
underground. Handling only
darkness, you have not become
accustomed to it. You want to get out.
One day you find an object which
may be a chair; at any rate,
a surface. Standing on
this dark thing, you reach up.
Here at the top the smell
is oppressive, sweet. You almost
fall. But you push, and the top begins
to crack. Plaster, or something, falls
around you. Emerging, you know
the smell: cake. Noise, lights:
you are outside, standing giddily on the top,
swathed in ribbons. And there
are all your friends,
dressed up, half drunk. The applause
is enormous. It is a party
for you. One of the crowd, the drunkest
and happiest, shrilling through a megaphone
"Welcome home,"
is me.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

FICTION

Stephanie Eve Bernstein *(Anamnesis)* received an MFA from the University of California, Irvine in 1972. She presently lives in Los Angeles where she is at work on a novel.

Patricia Browning Griffith *(Dust)* was reared in East Texas near the Red River, and now lives in Washington D.C. Her fiction has appeared in *O. Henry Prize Stories, Harpers* and other magazines. Her first novel *The Future Is Not What It Used To Be,* was published by Simon & Schuster in 1970. She has recently completed another entitled *Variations on a Narrow Highway.*

William Harrison *(The Good Ship Erasmus)* is the author of three novels, the most recent of which is *Lessons in Paradise.* A collection of short stories, *The Rollerball Murders,* in which this story appears, will be published in late June. Mr. Harrison is currently living in London where he is revising the title story for a forthcoming movie.

Erik Tarloff *(Flesh, Pleasures of the)* attended Brandeis University and the University of California, Berkeley. He lives in Berkeley, and is at work on a novel.

INTERVIEW

Benjamin DeMott is a novelist, essayist and teacher. His most recent work is *Scholarship for Society: A Report on Educational Reform,* published in 1974 by The Educational Testing Service. He is a Professor of English at Amherst College and lives in Amherst, Massachusetts.

POETRY

Jon Enroth lives in Seattle, and has studied poetry with Jean Garrigue, Elizabeth Bishop and David Wagoner at the University of Washington.

Stephen Frank attended Clark University and presently makes his home in Austin, Texas.

D. E. Fredd's fiction and poetry has appeared in a number of periodicals including *Transatlantic Review.* He is now working on *Doctor Proctor,* a novel. He lives in Arlington Massachusetts.

Gary Gildner teaches creative writing and modern poetry at Drake University. He is the author of three volumes of poetry, *First Practice, Digging for Indians,*and *Nails,* which is soon to be published by the University of Pittsburgh Press.

Jeff Grinnell is living in Iowa City where he is a member of the Writer's Workshop.

Fanny Howe has published a book of fiction *Forty Whacks*, poems *Eggs*, and has two novels forthcoming in the fall. She lives in Massachusetts.

Philip Legler teaches English at Northern Michigan University. His most recent book is *The Intruder*, published by the University of Georgia Press.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Everette H. Maddox lives in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He has published in a number of poetry magazines, including *Kayak*, and this fall will participate in Tennessee's Poets-in-the-Schools program.

John McKernan lives in Huntington, West Virginia. This marks his first appearance in *The Paris Review*.

W.S. Merwin is the author of numerous books of poetry and translations, including *Writings to an Unfinished Unaccompaniment, Asian Figures, Transparents of the World* and *The Carrier of Ladders* for which he won the Pulitzer Prize in 1972.

Frederick Morgan, editor of *The Hudson Review*, is now at work on his second volume of poems. His first, *A Book of Change*, was published by Scribners in 1973 and nominated for the National Book Award.

Robert Phillips is a poet and critic who has published six books, including the recent *Moonstruck: An Anthology of Lunar Poetry*. Recent poems have appeared in *American Review, Poetry Encounter* and *New York Quarterly*. He lives in Katonah, N.Y.

S. J. Sackett teaches at Fort Hays Kansas State College. His work has appeared in a number of periodicals, including *Antioch Review*. His most recent book is a study of E. H. Howe, published by Twayne.

Ira Sadoff lives in Xenia, Ohio. His work has appeared in *Poetry, Antaeus, The American Poetry Review, Antioch Review* and elsewhere. His first collection of poems, *Setting Down*, is due to be published by Houghton-Mifflin in spring of 1975.

Richard Shelton's recent books include *Calendar* (Baleen Press) and *Of All The Dirty Words* (University of Pittsburgh Press) He is living in the Tuscon Mountains of southern Arizona.

Gerald Stern's work has appeared in *The American Poetry Review, The Scotsman* and *The Smith*. His books are *The Pineys, The Naming of Beasts* and *Rejoicing*. He lives in Raubesville, Pennsylvania.

Al Young is the author of a book of poems called *Dancing* (1969) and two novels, *Snakes* (1970) and *Who is Angelina* to be published in the fall. He lives in Palo Alto, California.

Alan Ziegler lives in New York City. He is co-editor of *Some* and teaches poetry in the New York schools. His most recent volume is *Planning Escape*, published in 1973 by Release Press.

ART

Deborah Remington lives in New York City. Her most recent exhibition of drawings and prints was at Brooke Alexander Inc., New York City, in May, 1974. She is represented by the Bykert Gallery in New York and by the Gallerie Darthea Speyer in Paris. Her paintings will be on view at the 71st American Biennial this summer at the Art Institute of Chicago.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Christopher Wilmarth is Professor of Sculpture at Cooper Union. In 1974, his work was exhibited at the Rosa Esman Gallery and at the Daniel Weinberg Gallery in San Francisco. Major new works will be shown at the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, in November, 1974.

EDITOR

Among the biographies not printed in our first issue is that of **Michael Benedikt**, our new poetry editor. He is the author of three books of poems published by Wesleyan University Press, *The Body, Sky,* and *Mole Notes;* his work has been anthologized in seventeen collections of American and British contemporary poetry. He is the editor of the forthcoming *The Poetry of Surrealism* (Little, Brown) and *The Prose Poem: An International Anthology* (Dell). His anthologies outside poetry include: *Modern French Theatre: The Avant-Garde, Dada, and Surrealism; Post-War German Theatre;* and *Modern Spanish Theatre* (Dutton; ed. with George Wellwarth). For Doubleday, he edited *Theatre Experiment*, an anthology of American plays. He has taught poetry at Bennington, Sarah Lawrence, and now teaches at Hampshire College in Massachusetts. A former contributing editor to *Art News* and *Art International*, he lives in New York City.

Contributors' notes received too late for publication in No. 57

Greg Kuzma lives in Crete, Nebraska where he edits *Pebble,* a poetry magazine, and the Best Cellar series of poetry pamphlets. He has new poems forthcoming in *Poetry, The New Yorker, Southern Review, Shenandoah* and other magazines. The Viking Press published his collection, *Good News* in 1973.

Stephen Sossaman is an editor of *The Long Island Review* and currently directs a poetry workshop at Kingsborough College in New York.

Ricardo da Silveira Lobo Sternberg is doing graduate work in comparative literature at UCLA. He has translated Jorge De Lima for a forthcoming pamphlet from *Stinktree.* Recently, he won first place in *The Nation's* student poetry contest. His work has appeared in *Abraxas, West Coast Poetry Review, Stinktree* and *The Dragonfly.*

Elena Wilkinson lives in New York City. Her work appeared in *Aphra, An Anthology of Women Poets* (Dremen Press, 1971), and in the coming *Chelsea.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Train, Cabot & Associates

Investment Counsel

345 Park Avenue, New York

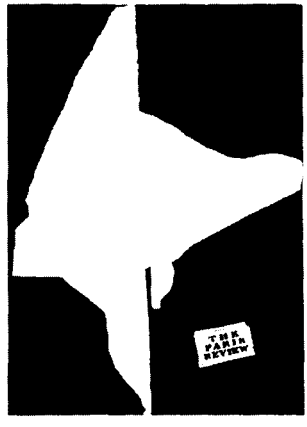
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hang The Paris Review

In 1965 The Paris Review became visual as well as verbal by commissioning contemporary artists throughout the world to produce outstanding works of art for The Review. From an original 23 prints (2 of which are pictured here), the number has grown to 35, and continues to grow.

Each poster has been printed under direct supervision of the artist, either by silkscreen or lithography, in signed and numbered editions of 150.

These prints and others are available now through The Paris Review. For a brochure illustrating the other fine prints, write to The Paris Review, 45-39 177 Place, Flushing, New York 11358.



PR15 ROBERT MOTHERWELL
35 x 26 Silk Screen
Blue, white

THE PARIS REVIEW

PR10 NICHOLAS KRUSHENICK
40 x 25 Silk Screen
Blue, yellow, black, white

Artists Cooperating With The Paris Review

Anuskiewicz	Indiana	Motherwell	Rosenquist	Ungerer
D'Arcangelo	Katz	Nevelson	Shahn*	Vicente
Dine	Kelly	Oldenburg	Stamos	Warhol
Frankenthaler	Krushenick	Ortman	Steinberg	Wesley
Freilicher	Marca-Relli	Poleskie	Summers	Wilson
Glaser	Marisol	Rauschenberg*	Trova	Youngerman
		Rivers		

* available only with complete set

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

available now from Flushing office
BACK ISSUES OF THE PARIS REVIEW

No 1	E. M. Forster Interview; William Styron, Terry Southern.*	$8.50
2	Francois Mauriac Interview; Richard Wilbur, Robert Bly, Blair Fuller.*	8.50
3	Graham Greene Interview; Evan S. Connell, Donald Hall.*	8.50
4	Irwin Shaw Interview; Terry Southern, Alfred Chester.	8.50
5	William Styron Interview; Samuel Beckett, Donald Hall.	8.50
6	Alberto Moravia Interview; Italo Calvino, Cecil Hemley.	8.50
7	Joyce Cary Interview; Picasso Portfolio; Mac Hyman, Evan S. Connell.	8.50
8	Ralph Ellison Interview; Louis Simpson, John Phillips, George P. Elliot.*	8.50
9	George Simenon Interview; Kenneth Tynan, Thom Gunn, James Wright.	8.50
10	James Thurber Interview; Evan S. Connell, Zygmunt Haupt.	8.50
11	Nelson Algern Interview; Jack Kerouac, Christopher Logue.	7.00
12	Faulkner Interview; Thom Gunn, Gina Berriault, W. S. Merwin.*	8.50
13	Dorothy Parker Interview; Jean Genet, Richard Yates.	7.00
14	Isak Dinesen and Francoise Sagan Interviews; Masson Portfolio.	7.00
15	Thornton Wilder Interview; Michaux, Terry Southern, Hughes Rudd.*	8.50
16	Robert Penn Warren And Truman Capote Interviews; Robert Bly.*	8.50
17	Frank O'Connor and Angus Wilson Interviews; John Wain, W. S. Merwin.	7.00
18	Ernest Hemingway Interview; Giacometti Portfolio; Philip Roth.	7.00
19	Henry Green Interview; Philip Roth, Niccolo Tucci, V. S. Naipaul.	4.50
20	James Jones Interview; Chagall Portfolio; Philip Roth.	4.50
21	T. S. Eliot Interview; N.Y. Artists; Terry Southern, Alexander Trocchi.	4.50
22	Lawrence Durrell Interview; William Styron, James Dickey.	4.50
23	Aldous Huxley Interview; Malcolm Lowry, Charles G. Finney.	4.50
24	Boris Pasternak and Robert Frost Interviews; Gina Berriault.	4.50
25	Robert Lowell Interview; Hughes Rudd, X. J. Kennedy.	4.50
26	Marianne Moore and Ilya Ehrenburg Interviews; Malcolm Lowry, Mailer.	4.50
27	Mary McCarthy Interview; Harry Mathews, Robert Bly, Denise Leevertov.	4.50
28	Pound and Henry Miller Interviews; Beckett, Borges, Alfred Chester.	4.50
29	Katherine Anne Porter Interview; Durrell Miller Letters; Malcolm Lowry.	3.00
30	S. J. Perelman and Evelyn Waugh Interviews; Niccolo Tucci, 22 poets.	3.00
31	Norman Mailer and Celine Interviews; Jack Kerouac, Henry Miller.	3.00
32	Cocteau, Picasso and Wm. Carlos Williams Interviews; Charles Olson.	3.00
33	Lillian Hellman Interview; R.V. Cassill, Jeremy Larner, Robert Creely.	3.00
34	De Beauvoir and Yevtushenko Interviews; Harry Mathews, Gary Snyder.	3.00
35	William Burroughs Interview; Irvin Faust, Leonard Gardner, Ron Padgett.	3.00
36	Saul Bellow Interview; William Styron, Robert Duncan, Barbara Guest.	3.00
37	Allen Ginsberg and Cendrars Interviews; Charles Olson, Gary Snyder.	3.00
38	Arthur Miller Interview; Brainard Elmslie Portfolio, Rosalyn Drexler. "Lowry in England", James Salter, Leroi Jones.	3.00
39	Edward Albee and Harold Pinter Interviews; E. E. Cummings Letters.	3.00
41	Vladimir Nabokov Interview; Kenward Elmslie, Kenneth Koch, Philip Whalen, John Ashbery.	3.00
42	Conrad Aiken Interview; Ed Sanders, Four French Poets.	2.00
43	Jack Kerouac Interview; Ashberry Schuyler collaboration; Francis Ponge.	2.00
44	Creeley and I. B. Singer Interviews; James Salter, Dianne di Prima.	2.00
45	John Updike Interview; Edward Hoagland Journal; Tom Veitch, Richard Brautigan, Bill Berkson, Ron Padgett, Frank O'Hara.	2.00
46	John Dos Passos Interview; Thomas M. Disch, Ted Berrigan, Kenneth Koch, Philip Whalen.	2.00
47	Robert Graves Interview; Ed Sanders, Robert Creely, Tom Clark.	2.00
48	John Steinbeck and E. B. White Interviews; Michael Brownstein.	2.00
49	Charles Olson Interview; Frank O'Hara, James Salter.	2.00
50	Georges Seferis Interview; John Ashberry, Kenward Elmslie, James Schuyler.	2.00
51	Pablo Neruda Interview; Harry Mathews, John Wieners, Michael McClure.	1.50
52	Anne Sexton Interview; Joyce Carol Oates, Keith Cohen.	1.50
53	John Berryman Interview; Joe Brainard, Allen Ginsberg, David Shapiro.	1.50
54	Jerzy Kosinski Interview; Kenward Elmslie, Allen Ginsberg.	1.50
55	Eudora Welty Interview; James Salter, James Schuyler, Michael McClure.	1.50
56	Anthony Burgess Interview; Jane Bowles Erica Jong, Maurice Roche.	1.50
57	Isherwood, Auden Interviews; Neruda, Merwin, Paley.	2.25

*Reprint Edition

Payment must accompany order

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Where quality is a tradition.

© 1970 Canada Dry Corp.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED